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[MADAM INTRODUCES HER PUPIL.]

THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side
And raised to Heaven her eyes so blue;
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride,
Dear lady, it hath wildered you."
The lady wiped her moist, cold brow
And faintly said, "Tis over now."

"A GENTLEMAN to see you, Mrs. Nugent. Shall I bring him in?"

Laura looked up at the servant who announced the guest, from the newspaper she was reading, and which seemed to have engrossed all her interest, to judge from the half-startled look in her beautiful eyes.

"Who is it, Phoebe? Did he not give a name?" she asked, fearfully.

There is no surer sign of some skeleton in the house than that alarmed, anxious expression on the occurrence of any unusual event or arrival of an unexpected guest.

"No, ma'am, but he desired me to say his business was urgent, and that he had an important message for you."

"Let him come in," was the curt reply. And the next instant Count Albert Fontane was ushered into the room.

The eyes of the two met, in half-questioning, half-reckoning examination of each other's features.

The stranger was the first to speak.

"Ha. I see you have not forgotten me, fair Laura," he said. "You remember the homage that I ventured to express in my countryman's exquisite lines when last we met?"

There was a fascination in the whole air and manner of the count that cast a grace even over his matured form and middle age. And the beautiful love of the disgraced Raymond Lester was not insensible to its power.

"Perhaps," she returned; "perhaps it may be so, but it is too many years ago for me to recall such

episodes of my youth. Can you expect me to remember every one who happened to think me worth a look or a rhyme?" she went on, half musingly, as the count quietly settled himself in a seat near to hers.

"It scarcely speaks for the delicacy or good taste of a woman who can utterly disregard a real admiration," he returned, coolly. "However, if there was any slight then, I have been well avenged since."

"I do not understand you," she replied, haughtily.

"My meaning is tolerably plain, in any case," he returned. "Raymond Lester was younger—perhaps handsomer than I was, and at that time his expectations were more alluring. But he did not marry you, whatever may have been the extent of his power or your weakness."

Laura Nugent was certainly past the early youth when blushes rise spontaneously to the female cheeks. But, either from anger or from shame, her whole face crimsoned like vivid flame and gave an unnatural brilliancy to her darkly glittering eyes.

"It is scarcely a passport to favour or confidence for you to insult me thus," she said. "If you have no other object I would remind you that these rooms are mine, and that you are only here at my pleasure."

"I have too much confidence in your good sense, to fear you would refuse me, fair lady. We are both older than when we met in the gay saloons of Baden; you have not the world at your feet now and I have more to offer than then. Our respective years are thus somewhat equalled by the respective advantages we have to offer."

"Go on," she said, suppressing with difficulty her resentment and alarm. "What does all this mean? I want nothing. I will accept nothing at your hands."

"But perhaps you may be induced to accept my hand itself," was the cool response. "I am ready to take you, with all your antecedents—doubtful as they may be—your absence of fortune, and the incumbrance with which you have charged yourself, and which I am prepared to share with you, Mrs. Nugent."

Laura scarcely suppressed a start.

"This is madness," she said. "I scarcely know you, save by the casual acquaintance that I had well nigh forgotten. And, if I wished for any help in any duty I have undertaken, I can command it at far less serious cost. Be so good as to leave me, count."

"By no means. I have far too sincere a regard for you, Mrs. Nugent," he said, with unbroken composure. "You really are throwing away your own interest and safety in too insane a style for me to permit the sacrifice. You will be my wife, and Raymond Lester's child my daughter," he went on, unflinchingly. "It is your destiny. It is no use to struggle with fate, unless you would compass your very ruin."

Laura Nugent shivered.

There was a strange influence in the low, deep tone, the spell-like gaze that was more like the basilisk than the ordinary expression of human eyes.

"I have no wish to marry. I have no power to make over the daughter of Mr. Lester to your guardianship," she said, with a desperate attempt at firmness. "Certainly you can have no right to oblige me to such slavery. I will be free, even if I starve as its consequence."

"You have more sense," he returned, coolly, "and you have more taste for the beautiful and the luxurious than to sink into such abject misery and hardship. Ask yourself what can be the result of such a frantic self sacrifice. Either you must earn a precarious living or else you and the child of your successful rival will be paupers. Perhaps that is your mode of working your revenge," he went on, significantly.

"You are mistaken. Gwenda is provided for—however slenderly," she faltered, hesitatingly.

The count laughed scornfully. "Utter nonsense or deception," he said, abruptly. "Raymond Lester invested the poor, miserable pittance that remained to his child in his own name. It is all forfeited—whatever may be his self-deception as to the facts—it is assuredly forfeited, like the whole property of a felon. Be assured that not one

shilling will belong to the felon's child. She will be a burden on you till her own period for extortion and suffering comes."

Laura's eyes were covered, but her whole frame shivered at the words, perhaps at the opprobrious term applied to him she had once loved, perhaps at the prospect held out to herself.

"Ha! I see you will be wise; you will not persist in your refusal," he went on. "I will swear to you, if you desire, that I am not at all deceiving you in what I say. Gwendolyn Lester is a beggar. Her father was a faithless scoundrel. Are you to waste your youth and beauty and rights for the sake of those who have so deeply injured you? Pah! the very existence of that child—your rival's child—should freeze such milk-and-water instincts into hard, impenetrable ice."

Laura's blood seemed rather turned to fire than to frost, if the glitter of her eyes and cheeks could serve as its indication. She clenched her hands in a silent spasm of conflicting emotions, and the lips were compressed as if in pain, though still the eyes flashed bravely and proudly as if no humiliation crushed down the woman's spirit.

"Wait," she said, at length, "wait. Let me think. I have been mad, foolish, weak; but it shall be so no more. I have a plan, a purpose to fulfil. Let me think. There, I will return soon."

She hastily left the room and flew rather than walked to an adjoining apartment.

"Gwendolyn, where are you?" she said, her eyes glancing furtively round the chamber.

There was no reply, but the soft breathing of some living inmate of the chamber guided her to the spot where the lovely child was lying in a sweet sleep of fatigue and exhaustion.

Mrs. Nugent bent over her for a moment and studied the beautiful little features.

"Is she like her?" she murmured. "These are features all unlike the father's; yet she will be lovely, perhaps more so than I am. Perhaps her mother was lovely too; perhaps she did steal his heart, and that was but an idle excuse for his faithlessness. Shall I be revenged, and in the most effectual way, by my own elevation and her suffering?"

It appeared as if the little creature caught the sense of the murmured words, for in spite of the soft tone in which they were spoken she opened her eyes and gazed bewildered at the awakening from that unconscious sleep.

"Mamma, mamma! where are you?" she cried, wistfully.

"I am here. Do you want me, Gwendolyn?" said Mrs. Nugent, coming forward into the light.

"No, no, not you. I wanted mamma, but she is gone," wailed the girl.

"But I will be your mother, Gwendolyn. Have I not been as kind to you as she could have been?" asked Laura, concealing her own features even from that infantile gaze.

Gwendolyn perhaps had shaken off sleep now, and a half-alarmed, half-shy expression came over her face.

"Yes, but not like her nor papa. You could not be like her. Oh, if she would but come to me again!"

The beautiful large eyes filled with a moisture that was more like the suppressed grief of an adult mourner than the spontaneous wail of an innocent child.

Gwendolyn Lester little knew that the glittering tears, the determined expression of her child feelings, was sealing not only her own but others' destiny; still she involuntarily recoiled from that snake-like, glittering smile, which beamed on her like the cold rays of a winter moon.

"My child, all this is ungrateful folly, and if I were not very good to you and very sorry for such a poor, helpless little girl I should not take any more care of you, but send you somewhere else, to people who would not be so kind and gentle. Do you not understand that neither your papa nor mamma can ever come back again? They are dead, Gwendolyn, and in their graves, and I am your only friend."

"Did papa say so? Did he love you?" asked the child, doubtfully. "I mean like mamma?"

It was enough. Laura's very teeth ground together at the innocent, unconscious taunt, and without another word she closed the door and turned the key in the lock to prevent the child's possible escape.

The next instant she stood with the calm dignity of a princess before the quietly expectant count.

"Well," he said, "have you decided? I think you have had ample leisure to think. Will you be my wife after my ten long years of waiting?"

"Yes," she said, "I will. But what of that child?"

"She shall be cared for, but you must give her up to me without question or interference," he replied.

"Listen, Laura, and then you will understand the terms on which we are to form our new compact. I have sufficient money for any possible wish or fancy of yours. I can support my rank for my wife and for myself as becomes a long-descended nobleman.

But I do not intend, nor will I consent, to bring up a felon's child as a daughter of a noble race should expect. Gwendolyn Lester will be cared for, but in the rank to which her father has sunk—you understand that, Laura?"

His eyes had a fierce resolution in their dark glitter that might well daunt a far more masculine spirit than that of Laura Nugent, yet she hesitated in her reply.

"I promised him," she said, "that the child was never to know her parentage, and to be brought up under my care. It is like a vow to the dying. I dare not break the pledge."

Count Albert shrugged his shoulders scornfully. "You shall keep it," he said, "in the letter—ay, and I may say in the spirit also. Gwendolyn shall be educated in ignorance of her father's shame, and, as to your care, my beautiful Laura, it shall be as tenderly shown as is the maternal superintendence of half the noble mothers in England or the Continent."

"You see I wish to satisfy your scruples," he went on, coldly, "but that is all, remember, that I can yield. Choose between the life of a gay, cherished, flattered countess and a lonely, questionable, suspected woman. Belissima, I am not famed for patience, and have already given much to the claims of love," he continued, after a brief pause. "Choose, and without delay."

His gesture spoke even more plainly than words that the last sands of the allotted time were running out.

Laura Nugent's good angel may well have hovered over her at the instant she was forced to abandon his charge to the fate then trembling in the balance. But the fluttering of his wings was unnoticed or defied.

The white jewelled fingers were extended to the hand that already was stretched out to sleep them in the troth plight. Ere they were again freed from his grasp a splendid diamond and opal ring was added to the sparkling rings.

And Laura Nugent was indeed and in truth the plighted wife of Albert of Fontane, while the orphan, Gwendolyn Lester, was virtually abandoned to the keeping of her father's foe.

The strife was apparently too unequal for doubt as to its conclusion. But the battle is not to the strong.

Time would show where the strength of right and might contended for the pre-eminence if the innocent or the guilty would obtain the victory.

CHAPTER IV.

With hushed breath she sought her room.

I met her in the woods of May.

Bending a loaded bough.

She seemed as young and was so fair,

A rosy freshness in her air,

Spoke morning gliding into day.

"STENOX CAVALLI, I thought I had clearly explained to you that this child, I mean Miss Loraine, was not to be included in your lessons to the class."

And Madame MacLaine, the dignified and very rigid head of a Brighton establishment for young ladies, to which her foreign extraction was supposed to give peculiar advantages, even in that fashionable town, gave a little nod of the head, which clenched the effect of her reproof.

But the Italian only shrugged his shoulders with a deprecating persistence.

"Pardon me, madam, it is such a temptation when one finds so much talent and so easy to train. It is sufficient payment when the labour of teaching is thus enlivened by the rare pleasure of a pupil like the Signorina Gwendolyn."

"You find her clever? Has she any voice, any chance of distinguishing herself?" asked madam, reflectively.

"It is difficult to decide at twelve years old, which I believe you have stated to be the young lady's age," replied the signor; "but if I mistake not she is a real genius, ay, and in more things than music, madam. She has a better idea of our own sweet tongue than your pupils who are more advanced in age and in training; and so lovely as she promises to become in after days the combination might well create a furor," he went on, enthusiastically.

Madam shook her head impatiently.

"Really, signor, you talk like a romantic boy," she said. "Gwendolyn Loraine will simply content herself with the plain education which her future position demands. I should be violating my trust were I to give her advantages and ideas beyond her station."

"Why should she not rise superior to it?" asked the Italian, earnestly. "There is no nobility or wealth like Nature's gifts—so rare and so unequalled."

"She cannot—at least, not without falsehood and danger," returned madam, firmly. "Excuse me, signor, if I remind you that I am the head of this establishment, and the responsible person for my pupils and their treatment."

Perhaps the Italian might have hazarded a more

fervent response than would have altogether been prudent where a liberal part of his professional income was at stake. But at the moment Madame MacLaine was summoned to the drawing-room, where her professional visitors were duly conducted as an imposing preliminary to any business tending to mutual advantage of themselves and their hosts.

The card put into her hand was impressed with a name that indicated to her acute mind the peculiar position of her visitor. "Mr. Bolton, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London," had decidedly a legal one in every letter of the sharp characters.

And madam repaired to the saloon with visions of wealthy wards to be placed under unrestrained guardianship, dazzling her mental optics.

The gentleman who rose to meet her on her entrance was, however, little promising so far as outward indications were concerned. Young—at least, for such an office as the "principal" had gratuitously assigned to him—and with a baffling absence of all decided expression on his impassive face, Mr. Bolton scarcely seemed one to have either personal or professional charges to assign to the tuition of the "Flat House" establishment.

Madame MacLaine's bow was somewhat more formal and her accent less gracious than under more favourable circumstances.

"I am speaking to the head of this establishment I presume?" began the visitor, with the same colourless tone, if such a word may be permitted, as marked his physiognomy.

Madam bowed assent.

"I believe that you offer unusual advantages to those who have the means and the inclination to pay the equally unusual terms?" continued Mr. Bolton, calmly.

"That is a matter for the consideration of the friends and guardians of my pupils," replied the lady, coldly. "I am content, and never vary on any pretext from the arrangements I have made."

"Pray do not let us waste time in misunderstanding," returned Mr. Bolton, with the same imperturbable manner. "To come to the point, I am commissioned to ask from you an estimate of the expense attendant on every advantage you have to offer to your pupils."

Madam looked absolutely bewildered at so wholesale a demand. Perhaps her arithmetic was not equal to the occasion, but she hazarded a bold shot.

"It must depend on the age of the pupil," she said, "but at a rough guess I think I could promise to confer all possible privileges to the young lady in question for one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, unless some peculiar arrangement was demanded, in which case it would be fifty pounds more."

Mr. Bolton's lip curled, though luckily concealed under a very ample moustache and beard.

"I scarcely think there will be the costly necessity, madam," he returned, "so we will not dive into the extra superlatives to every advantage. I believe I may venture to settle on the lower figure you mention, which I understand includes all masters and mistresses in all the accomplishments you profess to teach here."

"Certainly, all are included," she replied.

"And would another fifty pounds be sufficient for the young lady's other expenses?" demanded the mysterious lawyer.

"I should think so, unless very expensive dress and luxuries were required," replied madam. "I would undertake the toilet necessities for that sum. May I ask the name of the young lady for whom you are making these inquiries?" she added, with a winning suavity of manner that betokened pleasant anticipations of a fresh and most profitable pupil.

Mr. Bolton gave one of his half-invisible smiles.

"I fear you may be somewhat disappointed, my dear madam, when I inform you that you are already acquainted with her—nay, that she is in your charge, though probably on very different terms. Can you guess to whom I allude?"

"Surely not to Gwendolyn! to Miss Loraine!" she gasped, well nigh breathless from surprise.

"Your penetration is, as I expected, acute and accurate," was the calm response. "It is on behalf of a friend to the little girl in question that I am here. My powers are unlimited in the commission I have received, so far as the funds in my possession go, so, madam," he added, decidedly, "nothing now remains but for me to see my little protégée and pay you the first advance of the stipulated sum," and he drew from his pocket a small but well-stuffed case, which he balanced on his fingers with tempting carelessness. "May I ask you to lose as little time as possible? I wish to catch the next train for an appointment this evening in London."

"Excuse me, sir, but I must first demand a little more definite information as to this singular proposition," said madam, hesitatingly. "Is it from Miss Loraine's guardian that you are come, with such very different instructions to those I have already received?"

"From a relative, who, however distant, does I believe claim to be next of kin to the child in

question, I have received my instructions," replied Mr. Bolton. "He is abroad—may even never recover his health so as to return to his native country—but, hearing of the child's orphanhood, he wishes to perform his duty to her, though without exciting expectations, and perhaps doing her mischief by any idea of future inheritance. Such are the views of my distant and unknown client, which I have engaged to carry out, with your assistance, madam, or that of some equally accomplished lady."

"But," demurred Madam MacLaine, who had by this time recovered her self-possession, "I scarcely see how I can transgress the directions given to me when Gwenda Lorraine was committed to my care, now some five years ago, by those who I understood had saved her from a friendless destitution on her father's death. As a lawyer, Mr. Bolton, you will I think scarcely advise my forfeiting such a trust."

"As a lawyer, madam, I can apprise you that the nearest of kin can claim a child, unless some special and legal document consigns her to a chosen guardian, and in this case there will be no necessity for you to appeal to your employers—whenever they may be—for some years to come, as all I have to do is to attend to Miss Lorraine's comfort and education till she is sixteen or seventeen. Whatever may be her future destiny you cannot object to her receiving the advantages thus offered to her. If you decline it will be my duty to place Miss Lorraine with some more reasonable protectress, and I shall not shrink from it."

The shot told. Madam's fingers itched to clasp the banknotes that were filling out that morose case, and to secure the pleasant prospect of their repetition during many succeeding years.

"Well, Mr. Bolton, I am sure I scarcely know whether I am doing right," she said, after a brief pause, "but the child in question is certainly unusually gifted, and it is a great temptation when the rare pleasure of cultivating such talents is offered amidst such dulness and stupidity. If you engage to hold me harmless, and if you will permit me to refer the former benefactor of Miss Lorraine to you in case of need, I will accept the charge, so long as the engagement on your part is fulfilled."

"That is, the money punctually paid," replied Mr. Bolton, coolly. "Be at ease on that score, madam; you will receive fifty pounds as surely as the quarters roll round, if I am satisfied with my ward's treatment and progress. Now perhaps you will allow me to see her before I close this agreeable interview by the last necessary conclusion of our business."

Madam rang the bell and gave the necessary orders, which were too rapidly obeyed to allow of any further conversation.

The young lawyer's eyes scanned with lightning-like quickness the face and mien of his child ward, though if a look of admiration did flash in his keen eyes it was too momentary for observation.

Gwenda was indeed fulfilling her early promise of beauty, and far more than what could have been then discovered of intellect and thought.

Tall for her years, and without the awkwardness of unusual growth, the figure was rapidly forming into lithe grace, and her face only needed the filling up of the colourless cheeks and the vivifying influence of confident happiness and tender surroundings, to make it most attractively beautiful.

"Gwenda, my dear, this gentleman has come to visit you, and make some fresh arrangements for your future education and habits; I thought you would like to hear for yourself what he wishes for you, and his expectations for your use of the privileges he is securing to you."

Gwenda's large eyes were fixed on the strange visitor as she spoke, with a thoughtful questioning that seemed scarcely to take in her governess's words.

"Who from, who sent you, please?" she said, eagerly. "Surely not Mrs.—"

"Hush, hush, Gwenda!" interrupted madam, quickly. "You forget your promise. Listen to what that gentleman has to say without venturing on such questions."

"Nay, madam, pray do not make me an object of tears to my little ward," said Mr. Bolton. "Miss Lorraine, there is only this to say to you as to my errand here. I have a commission from a relative, whose name I believe you would not know were I to be at liberty to repeat it to you. He wishes you to become accomplished in everything that can form a lady's character and habits. It will need great industry and great exertion to carry out his wishes. Are you equal to the attempt, Miss Lorraine?"

Gwenda gazed on him attentively for a few brief moments as if her very soul was vented in the inquiring gaze.

"Was it any one who loves me, or my father?" she said, thoughtfully.

"Yes, of that I am certain; you will give them joy if you do use the advantages they give you," returned Mr. Bolton, admiringly.

It was impossible to mistake that earnest gaze which questioned with the eyes as well as the lips.

"Then I will do it. I would rather die than disappoint those who love me," she returned, eagerly. "Only tell them—will you?—that Gwenda is not ungrateful."

Mr. Bolton seemed to peruse the sweet face as if to transfer the lineaments to his very heart. Then he turned with a resolute effort to the dignified principal of Flat House.

"It is enough, madam. My client can wish for nothing more. Miss Lorraine appreciates the boon thus offered to her. I shall come each term to test the progress she may make and report on it to her generous relative. And, believe me, neither your exertions nor hers will be lost on the friend for whom I am now acting."

Gwenda Lorraine heard the words and laid them to her heart of heart.

Madam MacLaine bowed graciously as she quietly dismissed her young pupil.

And Alfred Bolton concluded his pecuniary arrangements with the lady and departed from her residence, thoughtful and conscious of a strange, undefinable feeling pervading his eccentric nature for which he might have scoured himself had it appeared possible its real character could be recognized.

But, no; what love could be inspired by a child not yet in her teens?

CHAPTER V.

On, heavy years, grow swift and brief,
Death, lay thine hand upon my brow;
I wither as a shrunk-up leaf.

I perished while my days were young,
The thoughts to which my spirit clung
Condemned me like a sapless bough.

"COUNT and Countess Albert de Fontane."

The names came out loud and distinct in the vast staircases of the embassy at Naples, where a brilliant evening reception was being held. There was some curiosity, perhaps, as to the persons thus announced, for the names were strange and yet of historic familiarity to many of the persons present.

"Whom did he marry? What a splendid woman!" ran through the small, scattered group as they advanced into the saloon, after paying their respects to the Countess of Lorton, the hostess of the night.

"Is she not handsome? It is her first season in Naples. I fancy she was presented last drawing-room in London," said Philip Conyers, a young though hackneyed attaché, to a friend by whom he was standing.

"Why, Sholto, what ails you, man? you seem moonstruck," he returned, finding there was no reply to his question.

"Me? Oh, nothing. I was only taking a critical survey," returned Balfour, recovering his consciousness of the entourage in which he stood. "Yes, there is no doubt of it. Perhaps not in her first youth, but in the full, ripe mellowness of summer that is even more fascinating, eh, Conyers? I think I shall see whether an introduction can be obtained to the new queen of the day."

And he lounged carelessly away to the spot where the countess stood surrounded by a circle of admiring aspirants.

Certainly she was splendidly handsome in her whole appearance and mien.

Laura Nugent at twenty had not been half so gorgeously attractive as when at thirty or perhaps more than that magic age she stood in the midst of the fashionable throng. Her magnificent figure was developed into the most unrivalled richness of contour; her eyes had gained expression and power from the experience and it might be the very flight of years, and her complexion was still gloriously soft in its Oriental hue, warm and clear and velvety as a peach in autumn. Every charm was heightened by the very ideal of a becoming toilet.

The rich crimson velvet dress, softened down by a profusion of white lace and contrasted by diamonds and pearls of gorgeous rarity, was a toilet for a queen, and yet seemed only a fitting costume for that glorious beauty.

Sholto waited near her for a few minutes in earnest examination of every feature and gesture of the proud countess as she haughtily received the admiring homage of acquaintances and strangers.

Perhaps he was studying her identity with the simply dressed tenant of the modest apartment in the obscure street where he had last seen her.

But then his eyes turned to her husband, and albeit, more changed than his wife, there was no mistaking the stranger at Raymond Lester's trial.

He advanced to the side of the gorgeous figure, who, at the moment, was looking through a glass at some distant object just pointed out to her by the cavalier who was striving to gain her attention.

"Dare I hope that I am remembered, fair countess?" he said, in a low voice.

But subdued as was the tone it brought a painful start to the confused senses of the lady he addressed.

"I believe—yes—I do recall seeing you once before," she said, coldly; "but it is so long since that I have some excuse for surprise at the meeting."

"True. And it is not likely I could command your recollection as you would mine, Countess Laura," he resumed, in the same half-audible tone.

"The moon may look on many a brook; The brook can know no moon save one,"

he continued, with a marked emphasis.

Laura flushed impatiently, though certainly not at compliments that were so hackneyed and familiar.

"It is scarcely a time to be willingly brought back to memory," she replied. "There was too much that was painful for me to desire its associations to return to me, especially now."

And she glanced round at the brilliant crowd as if to reproach the bold intruder for his daring persistence.

"I quite comprehend you, countess, and yet if you are in any respect like what you have been described to me by those who loved you well you would not be able to bury such memories in Lethe," replied Sholto. "Nay, pardon me if I am too bold—too rash in my allusions," he went on, as he marked the wild pain that shot restlessly from her eyes. "I do not mean to pain—I would but heal the wound that I know must still rankle in your breast, by my kindness and sympathy."

"Hush, hush, do not, we may be overheard," she said, hurriedly. "Surely this is no time or place for such terrible recollections."

"Pardon me, you are wrong. It is best to find refuge and solitude in a crowd," he went on, carelessly. "There is no suspicion of the truth, and noisy gaiety may swallow up any sorrow and divert the pang ere it goes too deep. For instance, how could the admired wife of Count de Fontane bestow any deep or lasting regard on the once happy and prosperous Raymond Lester?"

Laura gave a sharp start round, as if an adder had stung her. But if she feared her husband it was superfluous, for the count was at the instant walking away with his host to give his opinion of a rare picture in a small adjoining apartment.

She strove to appear as if merely speaking of indifferent subjects to the new companion, before whose apparently welcome approach less favoured strangers felt somewhat back.

"If you have any news of—the friend of whom you speak, I shall be glad to listen to you," she said, in a difficult, gasping tone that showed how much her exertion cost her.

"Are you sure, countess? Can you say what will be your feelings at the news I may have to tell?" he asked, meaningly. "You are brave—you are prosperous and admired now—yet I am much deceived if you would not feel an aching pang at the memory of the unhappy one to whom I allude."

"Memory! do you mean that he is dead?" she asked, in a hushed tone that might have betided the neighbourhood of a corpse.

"I have heard it," he returned. "One who has been on a mission to that dismal land inquired as to his existence and his health. And he was informed that no such person was among the unfortunate ones condemned to punishment there. No doubt that he had not been able to endure such hardships, either in mind or body," he went on, musingly. "And perhaps it is as well. He is at least free from suffering now, poor fellow!"

Laura could have turned on the man who either willingly or thoughtlessly was pressing such hidden torture on her heart. She would have withered him by a look, chased him from her presence with scornful words, denied all interest in the miserable criminal of whom he spoke, but she was powerless now, and never had the strength of her fiery nature been tested more fully than at that time of smothered agony and fear.

"I agree with you. Death was best in his case, Mr. Balfour. Heaven rest his spirit," burst from her, involuntarily.

The young man watched the workings of her beautiful face. If he wished for her punishment he was inwardly content that his object was gained, or perhaps he feared to push her too far, and risk betrayal from her woman's weakness.

"You addressed me by my old and familiar name, countess," he said, more lightly; "but I must for the sake of society's prejudices for right style and title, inform you that I have changed it now to humour the fancies of a wealthy uncle who managed to procure for me the reversion to his title. I am called by the world Lord Saville, though from old friends I prefer the familiar 'Sholto' of days of yore."

"I must congratulate you, of course," she replied, forcing a smile. "I shall be glad to present you to the count by your correct style. I believe you do not know him—we have so lately arrived from England?" she said, interrogatively.

"Only by sight," he said, significantly. "Nor do I suppose he will remember that even we ever met. He was more likely to make an impression on me than to retain the remembrance of a beardless fellow as I was six years ago when I first observed him as a very remarkable individual at a memorable scene."

At the moment the man thus described came hastily toward them.

"I would not have left you, Laura, but that the earl wished for my poor judgment on a supposed Tintoretto. Shall we move to a cooler part of the room?" he said, offering the countess his arm.

"Let me first introduce Lord Saville to you," she said, with constrained calmness. "I knew him once, many years since, and he is good enough to recall our former acquaintance."

The count smiled blandly and held out his hand to the young man with winning cordiality.

"Any friend of my wife must be considered as a friend of mine," he said. "I hope we shall improve the acquaintance, Lord Saville. Will you join us in our tour of the room? We are but strangers here and I shall be glad of your pilotage through the unknown straits," he added, with a gay laugh. "I claim to be English, in at least three parts of my life and belongings, and the last few years' absence from Continental life makes me feel singularly benighted among the changed circles of this gay city, where I was once so experienced an habitué."

And Sholto assumed a task so dangerously tempting to his wishes.

(To be continued.)

MAKING WAX FLOWERS.

OUR lady readers will find the imitating of natural flowers in wax a very agreeable amusement for long winter afternoons and evenings. The work is not difficult, and with a little practice ornaments of great taste and beauty can be made. The materials can be obtained for a small sum from any dealer in artists' materials. Some knowledge of the general form of flowers is of course necessary to begin with, nor should a little artistic skill be entirely lacking. Forms of various leaves, of tin, to be used as patterns, may easily be obtained, but the best imitations of nature we have ever seen were made directly from the natural flower. A handful of blossoms may be purchased from any florist, and carefully dissected; then by tracing the shape of the leaves, etc., on paper, quite a collection of patterns may be gained.

The best white wax is required for the art—pure, and free from granulation. The consistency may need to be modified, according to the state of the weather, and the part of the flower to be imitated; it may be made firmer and more translucent by the addition of a little spermaceti, while Venice turpentine will give it ductility. In preparing the wax for use it is melted with Canada balsam, or some kind of fine turpentine, and poured into flat tin moulds; these give it the form of quadrangular blocks or slabs about an inch thick. These blocks are cut into thin sheets or films, in one or other of several different ways—by fixing them flat, with screw and a stop, and slicing off layers with a kind of spoke shave; or holding a block in the hand, and passing it along a carpenter's plane having the face uppermost, or causing the block to rise gradually over the edge of the mould, and cutting off successive slices with a smooth edged knife.

The colouring of the wax is an important matter, seeing that in some instances the tint must penetrate the whole substance, whereas in others it is better when laid on the surface as a kind of paint. The choice of colours is nearly the same as for other kinds of artificial flowers, but not in all instances. The white colours are produced by white lead, silver white, and one or two other kinds; for red, vermilion, minium, lake, and carmine; for rose colour, carmine, following an application of dead white (to avert yellowish tints); for blue, ultramarine, cobalt, indigo, and Prussian blue; for yellow, chrome yellow, unssicot, Naples yellow, orpiment, yellow ochre, and gamboge; for green, verdigris, Schweinfurth green, arsenic green (the less of this the better), and various mixtures of blue and yellow; for violet, salmon, flesh, copper, lilac, and numerous intermediate tints, various mixtures of some or other of the colours already named. Most of these colouring substances are employed in the form of powder, worked upon a muller and stone with essential oil of citron or lavender and mixed with wax in a melted state; the mixture is strained through muslin, and then cast in the flat moulds already mentioned; or else a muslin bag filled with colour is steeped for a time in the melted wax. The material dealers sell these slabs of wax ready dyed, to save the flower maker from a kind of work which is chemical rather than manipulative. Some flowers require that the wax shall be used in a purely white bleached state, colour being afterwards applied to the surface of selected spots.

The wax is, of course, the chief material employed in wax flower making; but it is by no means the only one. Wire bound round with green silk, tinting brushes and pencils, shapes or stencil patterns, moulds, and stampers, flock or ground-up woollen rag, and many other implements and materials are needed. The patterns of leaves and petals are made from paper or of thin sheet tin, copied from the natural

objects; and the wax sheets are cut out in conformity with them. Only the smaller and lighter leaves are, however, made in this way; those of firmer texture and fixity of shape are made in plaster moulds. The patterns are laid on a flat, smooth service of damp sand; a ring is built up round them, and liquid plaster is poured into the cell thus formed. Generally two such moulds are necessary, one for the upper and one for the lower surface of the leaf. Sometimes wooden moulds are employed, into which (when moistened to prevent adhesion) the wax is poured in a melted but not very hot state. Occasionally the entire mould is dipped into molten wax, to produce petals and leaves of peculiar size and shape. The stems are made by working wax dextrously around wires, with or without an intervening layer of silken thread. By the use of flock, down, varnishes, etc., the leaves are made to present a glossy surface on one side and a velvety surface on the other. A singular mode of preparing films of usual thickness is by the aid of a small wooden cylinder, like a cotton reel, or rather a ribbon reel; this is dipped and rotated in melted wax until it takes up a thin layer, which layer, when cold, is cut and uncoiled; the difference of smoothness which the two surfaces present fits them to represent the upper and lower surfaces of a leaf or petal. The combination of all these materials into a built-up flower is a kind of work not differing much from that exercised in regard to textile flowers.

TO FLORENCE.

WHEN the golden rays of morning
Gently to thy chamber come,
Telling thee of peace and gladness
In their far-off "Fairy Home;"
As they kiss thy face and whisper
Of the joy in store for thee,
Do they tell thee, fairest maiden,
Do they tell thee aught of me?

When the twilight shades are falling,
And the stars come one by one,
To each other gladly calling
That another day is done;
And the laughing, dancing waters
Clap their hands and sing in glee,
Do they tell thee, fairest maiden,
Do they tell thee aught of me?

When in soft and dreamy slumber
The sweet spirits of the night
All about thy bedside hover,
Whispering to thee in delight,
Telling in what heart thou reignest,
Saying "Thou to it must flee,"
Do they tell thee, fairest maiden,
Do they tell thee aught of me?

As I listen to the murmur
Of the night wind in the grove,
I can hear distinctly, plainly,
It revealing all my love;
As I listen to the voices
Of the ever-changing sea,
They are telling, fairest maiden,
They are telling me of thee.

II. T.

HINTS TO MOTHERS.—If you wish to cultivate a gossiping, meddling, censorious spirit in your children, be sure when they come home from church, a visit, or any other place where you do not accompany them, to ply them with questions concerning what everybody wore, how everybody looked, and what everybody said and did; and if you find anything in all this to censure, always do it in their hearing. You may rest assured, if you pursue a course of this kind, they will not return to you unladen with intelligence; and rather than that it should be uninteresting, they will, by degrees, learn to embellish in such a manner as shall not fail to call forth remarks and expressions of wonder from you. You will by this course render the spirit of curiosity—which is so early visible in children, and which, if rightly directed, may be made the instrument of enriching and enlarging their minds—a vehicle of mischief which shall serve only to narrow them. It requires more magnanimity to give up what is wrong than to maintain what is right; for our pride is wounded by the one effort and flattered by the other.

LET THE YOUNG ENJOY THEMSELVES.—It is a mistake many parents make, that of trying to make premature men out of boys, and of holding them selves aloof from all the emotions, sympathies, pleasures and pursuits of youngsters. It is not natural for boys to be so staid, reserved, nor always well-mannered, and the discipline that makes them so before their time will probably distort or cripple some of their finest qualities. The roots of a young tree must have the room to spread, and if they are inexorably crammed into a hole big enough for only

half of them, some are sure to be grievously hurt, and the tree prematurely damaged. As for education, it must always be remembered that what a boy learns from books is but a small portion of his education. That which he gathers from his surroundings and from his home, pleasant or repulsive, from his associations, from Nature, from everything he sees and hears, goes equally to form his mind and character.

EGYPT.

THERE is much in the history both of ancient and of modern Egypt to interest and instruct the earnest and thoughtful mind. It is remarkable both for its physical peculiarities and for its historical interest, which it still retains in its wonderful monuments, which are the earliest records of civilization. The pyramids, temples and palaces of Egypt have been secured by their massive strength from entire destruction; but the houses were built of more perishable materials, and no such fortunate accident as that which preserved Pompeii has enabled us to look into the interior of an ancient Egyptian town; and in many places, where it is evident that a dense population must have existed, from the extensive cemeteries, not even the foundations of their cities can be discovered.

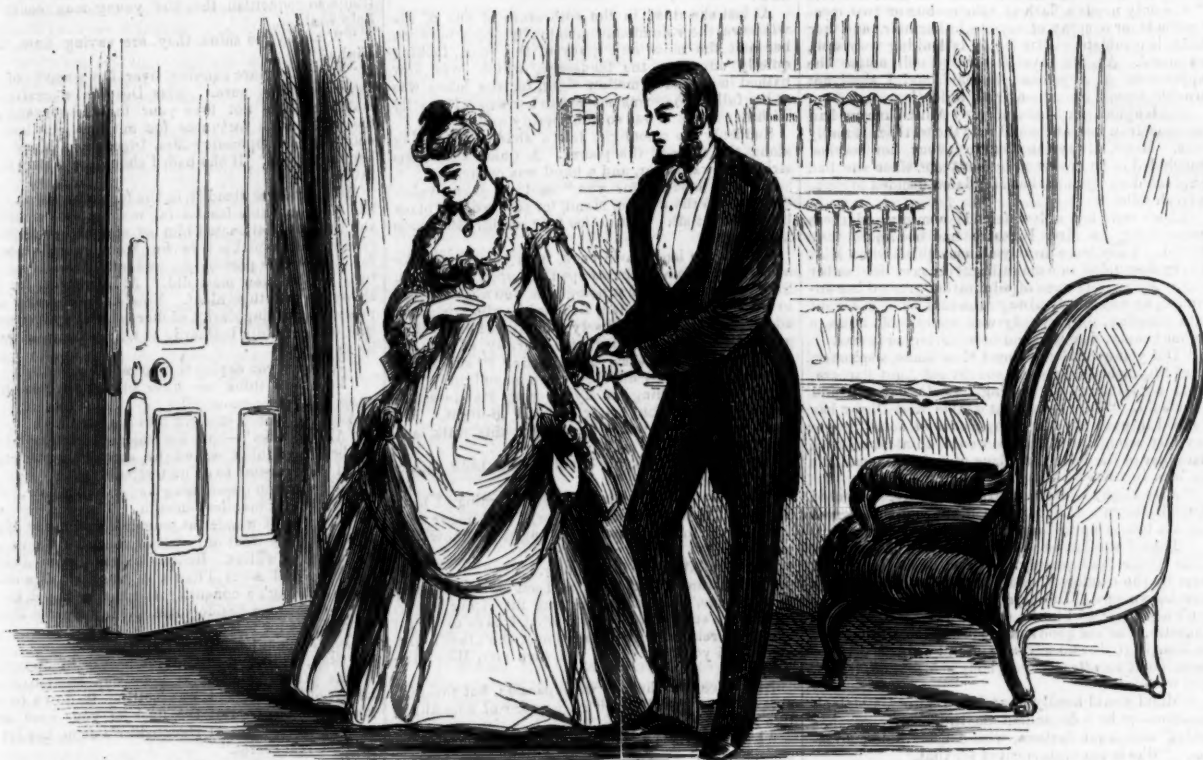
Egypt is situated in Africa, in the valley of the Nile, being its lowest and most northern part, between its last cataracts and the sea. It contains about eleven hundred square miles, and has been compared to an emerald set in gold, from its luxuriant vegetation when compared with the surrounding desert, which, between the Nile and the Red Sea, has several chains of mountains. About two hundred miles from the Nile, on the oasis of Siwah, the foundations of the once celebrated temple of Jupiter Ammon may still be seen, and in the dreary wilderness some prison-like monasteries are visible. The Nile is the only river of Egypt, and is half a mile wide; numerous canals run from it, and one connects it with the Red Sea. The works which have been completed within a few years add very much to its travel and commerce, and especially the railroad from Alexandria to Suez, which introduces a new era into its history, much desired, as does also the ship canal across the isthmus.

A majority of the inhabitants of Egypt are peasants, who may be regarded as descendants of the ancient Egyptians; they are called Fellahs; they have embraced Mohammedanism, and are considered to be Arabs, but are very different from the true Arab, who always regards them with contempt. Those who believe in the Christian religion are called Copts; they number about one hundred and fifty thousand, and hold a respectable position in society by means of their education and their useful talents. The Turks are a privileged class, a kind of aristocracy, and hold the principal offices under government.

The government of Egypt is an unqualified despotism subject to the Sultan of Turkey, but ruled by a pacha or viceroy. Lately schools and colleges have been established, and the arts, learning and civilization of European nations introduced. Cairo is the capital and largest city in Africa. Alexandria, the chief seaport, was once the most splendid city in the world, and the centre of science and commerce. Among its ruins still stand Cleopatra's Needle and Pompey's Pillar, built of fine granite. The ruins of other ancient cities attest its former greatness, and their antiquities are the most remarkable in the world. The pyramids, on the west side of the Nile, near Cairo, are the most stupendous of the works of man; they contain specimens of furniture and paintings which attest the luxury which prevailed in their house decorations. Their walls and ceilings are painted in a variety of patterns, combining elegance of form with richness of colouring. Many of them, even the very early kings, show a remarkable resemblance to those which we see in the Mosaics of the Romans, and that have been imitated in our carpets and floor-cloths. What is called the Greek border appears in a tomb of the eighteenth dynasty, and resemblances are so numerous and so striking as to leave no doubt that the Greeks and Romans derived from Egypt those combinations, the artistic excellence of which is shown by the circumstance that they please as much at the present day as in the remote age of their appearance. —A. J. C.

THE British Museum have agreed to resign their patronage into the hands of the Government. The staff of the museum comprises about 400 persons of all grades.

ON the 29th ult., as some workmen were excavating at the depth of about twenty feet in Cannon Street for a new warehouse, they discovered a quantity of bronze medallions or badges of honour in a fine state of preservation, bearing dates between the years 1306 and 1361. They are now in the possession of Mr. G. Newby, Gaidhall.



[A DECLARATION.]

THORNEYCROFT GRANGE.

CHAPTER I.

No power achieved, either by arms or birth,
Equals love's empire both in heaven and earth.

Walter.

It was a glorious sunset scene, the sky dabbled and listless enough overhead, but on either hand breaking into waves of crimson and scarlet, that swept on, intensifying, to the very heart of the west, where they flamed and dazzled like some great universal fire.

There was a soft flush in the air that had set the whole landscape blushing. The hills grew rosy under it, as if the last stray sunbeams, in kissing them farewell, had also whispered some wondrous secret in their ear. Even the valley was warmly tinted and luminous, and the little village nestled so cozily in it had never seemed half so pleasant or inviting as it now did, in all this crimson glory.

Thorneycroft Grange, the home of the Ingestres, loomed up rather grandly from the summit of the hill just back of the village. On its gray, stately walls the western glory always shone the warmest and brightest, and lingered longest, as if aware of the hospitable hearts that beat within, and sure of a cordial welcome.

In this rosy sunset hour Maud Ingestre was standing on one of the long piazzas that took in the entire circumference of the family mansion at Thorneycroft Grange—standing motionless and silent, like the foolish enthusiast that she was, her whole soul drinking in the beauty and soft tranquillity of the scene. There was a great deal of latent poetry and sentiment in the girl's nature, for a beautiful view always set her pulses throbbing; and now her bosom was heaving, her lips slightly apart, her eyes large and luminous, while a soft colour was staining her delicate cheeks. Her whole attention seemed to be wrapped up in and absorbed by the wondrous picture upon which she was gazing so eagerly.

Suddenly there came a rustle of drapery close behind her, and a warm, soft hand was dropped upon her own, where it lay carelessly resting upon the balustrade. She turned with a quick start, looking around.

"Is it you, mamma?" she asked, with a sigh of relief, and a ready smile.

"Yes, my child," replied Mrs. Ingestre's calm, gentle voice. "You seemed startled. Whom did you take it to be?"

"I did not know who it was," answered Maud with a slight hesitation. "I believe I had half for

gotten myself in this scene before me. Is it not lovely?"

"Very. Italy itself cannot boast of anything more enchanting than some of our sunsets. We have reason to feel proud of them. But we cannot stay to admire it now, Maud. Magdalen and I have been arranging the flowers on the mantel and tables. Now we want your opinion on what we have done."

"Yes, mamma. I was quite forgetting that we are to have company this evening. I will come in directly."

Mrs. Ingestre smiled kindly as she took her arm. A truly refined and cultivated woman herself, gifted with a delicate sensibility and a rare perception of whatever is grand and beautiful, she could fully understand and sympathize with her daughter's mood.

They entered the parlour, through one of the long, low windows, which was open.

She was standing beside the centre-table, just dropping a pink japonica bud into a bouquet of rare and exquisite exotics that had been placed there—this Magdalen Digby, of whom they had spoken, a wondrous creature to look upon, as she stood there. Tall, even beyond the usual height of women, and superbly formed, her classic head, with its stately poise, carried out to perfection the idea of her majestic, Juno-like figure. It was a strong, passionate face from which the masses of purple-black hair were swept back in such fragrant waves; the jetty eyes, lighted by a deep, intense glow; the lips, ripe and luscious with their melting ruddiness; a rich carmine flaming from either cheek.

Scores of infatuated admirers had raved about the magnificent beauty of this woman, and scores would again be guilty of the same folly; for she could hardly help but intoxicate and bewilder, with all these charms which nature had lavished upon her.

She looked up as the mother and daughter entered, a shade of some hidden feeling sweeping suddenly over her face.

"Oh, you have come, Maud," she began, with real or pretended animation. "Mrs. Ingestre and I have been arranging these flowers to the best of our ability, but we missed your taste sadly. We can do nothing just right without you, so please let us hear your criticisms at once."

She smilingly crossed the room, laying her white hand upon Maud's arm. There might have been a spice of sarcasm in what she had said, but, if so, her companions utterly failed to detect it.

"How can you speak in that way?" asked Maud, with considerable earnestness. "You know that your taste is very nearly perfect, Magdalen. I am

sure it is much better than mine, and mamma is the only person in the whole world who would not admit it at once."

Mrs. Ingestre smiled.

"You are both abundantly gifted in that respect, but in a different way. I like Maud's manner of arranging flowers, because they seem to look so fresh and pure when they come from under her hand. There is nothing gaudy or showy about them. Few have such a faculty, you will admit that, my dear Magdalen. She makes them seem more like what they were meant to be."

Miss Digby held up her hand deprecatingly.

"You are speaking as if you expected me to dispute you, Mrs. Ingestre," she said, quickly and lightly. "But, instead, I agree with you perfectly. Maud has this peculiar faculty, and no wonder, for she is the very impersonation of purity herself. Am I not right, Miss Dean?"

The question was addressed to Miss Barbara Dean, who that moment entered the apartment. Miss Barbara was a maiden lady of near forty, single because she chose to be, not from any lack of eligible offers. Maud always called her Aunt Barbara, though the relationship between them was not so close as that. She had been the second cousin of Maud's father, who was now dead, and had lived with the family at Thorneycroft Grange for a great many years. She made a great pet of the girl.

"Of what were you speaking?" she now asked, fixing her penetrating eyes upon Magdalen's face.

"Of a subject that will be sure to call all your powers of eloquence into play," Miss Digby replied, merrily. "We were speaking of Maud's excellences and surpassing virtues."

She looked significantly at Mrs. Ingestre, who replied to the glance by a rather faint smile. The doting fondness of the old maid had long been a standard joke among some of the frequenters of the Grange (made so, in the first place, through the efforts of Magdalen in that direction); but Mrs. Ingestre herself was too much of a real lady to relish any joke gotten up at the expense of another's feelings.

"Don't mind her, Aunt Barbara," interrupted Maud, feeling slightly hurt. "She is only joking. They called me in to look at the bouquets. Are they not beautiful?"

"Yes, they are very beautiful, child."

"Now," said Mrs. Ingestre, "let us descend to the practical, which is of more importance to us at present. Are we all dressed for the evening? It is quite time at all events. We are in the country we must remember, where early hours are fashionable. Our friends may drop in upon us at any moment."

"Maud could not find anything more becoming than that cloud-like dress," returned Aunt Barbara. "She only needs a flash of colour—one or two moss rosebuds, or a spray of myrtle in her hair, and her toilet is complete. Miss Digby is looking very well, as usual. As for myself, nobody will notice the appearance of a yellow old maid, and I shall not trouble myself to make a fresh toilet."

She laughed good-naturedly. Aunt Barbara had no conceit in her, and could read the world as it really was. Maud, always anxious to favour her fancies, concluded to be governed by her taste, since she had expressed an opinion; but Magdalen decided to make a fresh toilet.

There were but a few friends coming and these came early, as Mrs. Ingestre had been sure they would. They were nearly all assembled when Miss Digby descended, in a magnificent dress of rich amber silk. An audible buzz of admiration greeted her entrance, as was nearly always the case when she went into company. Everybody was ready to do homage to her beauty, dazzling and bewildering as it was.

"Did you ever?" exclaimed Miss Blake, a spinster, aged fifty, who had at once sought out Aunt Barbara, from a "fellowship of feeling," as Magdalen would have said. "Do see in what a style Miss Digby has flashed in upon us! The impudence of some people is really astonishing. One would think she was a daughter of the house, in place of a poor dependent on Mrs. Ingestre's bounty!"

"Miss Digby is dressed rather showily," assented Aunt Barbara. "But then you know plain dresses are not becoming to her style."

"Then I wouldn't have any style at all," went on Miss Blake, indignantly. "Just look at Maud, over by the window yonder, so modest and sweet as a new-blown rose. I always tell my friends that there isn't a prettier girl in the whole country than Maud Ingestre. She's as good as she's pretty too. If she stood in Miss Digby's shoes you wouldn't see her decking herself out to attract everybody's attention. That you wouldn't!"

"Maud would hardly have fallen into Magdalen's position—to be a dependent on the bounty of anybody," said Aunt Barbara, with considerable emphasis. "She is too high spirited for that."

"Those two girls are not one bit alike, of course not, as I always tell people—my particular friends, you know. But," sinking her voice a little, "is it really true that Miss Digby is entirely dependent, that she hasn't a penny of her own?"

"Perfectly true. I ought not to say so, but then she is putting on altogether too many airs, and deserves to be humbled. That very dress was a present from Mrs. Ingestre. I can't see what possesses Esther to keep her in this way, though she says it is to be company for Maud. Were it my case I should choose anybody else for company rather than her."

"That's my idea, exactly; that is just what I tell all my friends." And Miss Blake bobbed her head most emphatically, sending the short, crisp curls tossing over her wizen face. "She has been here more than a year now, hasn't she?"

"Yes."

"How did she happen to come in the first place? I've often wondered, but never quite liked to ask. I have heard some say that Mr. Devonshire picked her up in some queer, out-of-the-way place, and brought her here. It isn't true, is it?"

"Hush! She is coming this way—she will hear you! Yes, Miss Blake,"—in a louder tone, for Magdalen was close beside her—"I have really read the book, and I but tell you my honest convictions when I say that is a wonderful book, a wonderful book!"

It would have been a pleasant scene for a stranger to look upon, everything seemed so cosy and comfortable. There was nothing of the froth and sparkle and jam of heated drawing-rooms in town, where one is bound to receive her "dear five hundred" whether she has accommodations for so many or not. Instead the rooms were cool and fragrant, the guests few—the crème de la crème of county society. The soft shimmer of lamp-light stole through the odorous air, which was for ever athrob with soft, marmurous music. Everything seemed to be in precisely its proper place, and all was moving on harmoniously.

"There is nobody like Mrs. Ingestre for getting up a nice little reunion," was repeated more than once among the guests that evening.

Maud glided about from room to room, assisting her mother in her duties as hostess, and striving to make everybody feel happy and at ease. She had never looked more lovely than she did that night, with only a knot or two of flowers to relieve the mist-like whiteness of her drapery, a soft colour flaming in her cheeks, and a happy glow lighting her eyes. Perhaps the knowledge that a pair of earnest gray orbs, those of Ernest Devonshire, were watching her every movement with a deep and tender interest,

went far towards making up her enjoyment of the hour.

At last she stood in the embrasure of one of the windows, the voluminous curtains dropping between her and the noise and glare of the room, looking quietly out upon the landscape, which was now bathed in a flood of mellow light, for the moon was at the full. The scene seemed to correspond exactly with her mood, it was so unutterably calm.

Suddenly the moonlight left a shadow darkening along the floor of the piazza. A quick step came striding towards her, and a hand was outstretched.

"I was looking for you," said an eager voice. "Come into the garden, Maud, for this is not a black but a night at all. Last notice how brightly the moon is shining."

At first she had drawn back, with something like a shiver, but finally she stepped out upon the piazza. She had reasons for not being over and above partial to the society of this man, Leonard Harding, who had addressed her thus familiarly; but then he was her guest, and must be treated with courtesy, at least.

"What did you wish, Mr. Harding?" she asked, quietly, standing by his side in the moonlight.

"I have something to say to you, Maud—something that had much better be said to-night. The garden seems deserted. Come down this walk, and I will tell you so we go."

He tried to lead her on, but she drew back rather haughtily.

"Really, you must excuse me, Mr. Harding. I have my guests to look after. However, I will linger here a moment if there is anything I ought to know immediately."

The man bit his lip frowningly.

"It is strange that you should not be more ready to oblige me," he said, repressing his rising anger. "But I am sure you can guess what I have to say: it is only to reiterate my declaration of the other night, and to tell you that I love you, love you, Maud, Ingestre!"

His voice was hoarse with passion, but the girl shrunk away from him with a gesture of something like repugnance.

"I am surprised at you, sir!" she exclaimed, with some hauteur. "You know very well that this is a forbidden topic between us. You have already received the answer to your suit, and know that I can only esteem you as a friend. Then why do you still persist in persecuting me with unwelcome attentions?"

He caught her hand humbly, deprecatingly.

"My great love must plead for me. You have had more time for reflection since I spoke with you last, and I hoped that you might have arrived at a different conclusion. But I would not cause you pain or trouble. I will be for ever silent rather than do that."

"I am more sorry than I can say for what has happened," she returned, in a softened tone. "If you will it so, we can still be warm, true friends, Mr. Harding, but nothing more. I can never care for you as you wish."

She turned away with a look of regret upon her face, and went slowly back to the parlour again. Leonard Harding remained a few moments longer, pacing back and forth the length of the piazza, his hands clenched, his teeth set hard, as if in a paroxysm of suppressed fury.

Finally, he turned to follow her, and was met in the doorway by Magdalen Digby. She was a little startled at meeting him face to face there, but finally glanced somewhat significantly at his white lips.

"The lion has been raging internally, and is ready to tear himself," she said, meaningly. "But where is the use of getting into a passion? It is your calm, collected men who always accomplish most. You ought to remember that, Leonard Harding."

He looked at her in some surprise.

"What do you know of me or my feelings, Miss Digby?" he asked.

She smiled.

"The veriest child might read your secret, and I am not blind or an imbecile. Sometimes I almost wish I were the latter. It would save me from realizing some rather harsh truths. Look yonder, will you?"

And she pointed to the extreme left of the large parlour, where Aunt Barbara and Miss Blake were plainly visible through the open doorway.

"Well?" he uttered, impatiently.

"That is the old maid's retreat, and Miss Barbara Dean is prime minister. There is nothing happens here that they do not see. Look! they are watching us now. One would think these shrubs would shelter us from their observation, but they do not. They have eyes that see through everything. They are talking about us, and they shall have something to feed their gossip with."

Suiting the action to the word, she struck an attitude so coquettish that the young man could not help smiling.

"What do you think they are saying now, Miss Digby?"

"Why, they are running over the gamut of our demerits, to be sure. Miss Dean is a crafty old maid, and does not love your humble servant any too well. It is fortunate for me that she has not succeeded in impressing Mrs. Ingestre or Maud with her sentiments. If she had, I should be utterly miserable."

He looked her steadily in the face a moment. He had often met this fascinating woman, but somehow she had never attracted him as she had done most others. Perhaps his love for Maud would account for this, or it is possible he understood her real nature better than most did. At any rate, he had always kept rather aloof. Now he was really surprised at the singularity of her words and manner. She was certainly foolhardy to trust him in this way, he thought.

"Why are you saying this to me?" he asked.

"Because I think we have played at cross-purposes quite long enough."

And she looked straight into his eyes.

"And because"—here her voice took a lower tone—"because I think we might each help the other, could we but come to an understanding."

"There was no questioning her meaning now. She was making it manifest enough."

"Of course I wonder at your infatuation for Maud Ingestre," she went on. "However, there is no accounting for whims. Believe it or not, every Bottom is sure to find some Titania to 'stroke his amiable ears.' Though a nonentity, she has managed to bewitch other men beside yourself. Let me cite Ernest Devonshire for instance."

Leonard laughed sarcastically.

"Stay," she cried. "A light breaks in upon me! I was just wondering at your depreciation of the fairest of her sex, and was setting it down to womanly jealousy. But the flash of your eyes when you mentioned Ernest Devonshire's name has let me into the real secret."

Magdalen smiled, still provokingly cool.

"You are very discerning," she said, calmly, "but be sure you read the signs aright. Even a person of your discrimination might be mistaken, you know. But a truce to this idle talk—you mean to marry Maud Ingestre? Possibly I might help you towards accomplishing your object."

She stood before him unmoved, as dazzling and bewildering in her wondrous beauty as she had ever been. She was as unreadable as the Sphinx. He did not understand her—he could not. She baffled all his powers of penetration.

"How?" he asked, rather hoarsely.

She unclosed her lips to speak, but Mrs. Ingestre passed that way just then, pausing near them at the open window. Magdalen signed for him to be quiet.

"Are you not tired of admiring the moonlight, Mr. Harding?" she asked, abruptly. "Come, let us return to the parlour."

She took his arm, and they entered the lighted room together, pausing to exchange a gay word or two with Mrs. Ingestre, as they went on. She was not to suspect the character of the conversation which they had just been holding.

They found Maud at the other end of the parlour, just rising from a gamest chess with Colonel Lennox, an old, scarred veteran, who had nothing but his honourable name to recommend him.

"You dear, generous soul!" whispered Magdalen, softly. "I thought you did not like chess."

"Nor do I," returned Maud; "but Colonel Lennox could not find anybody else to play with him, and I so thought to try my skill." And then, turning to the colonel, with a pleasant smile, "I think, sir, you must have used more strategy in real warfare, or you would have made but a poor soldier. You did not allow your enemies to take the advantage of you as I have done."

"That is easily accounted for, Miss Maud," replied the old warrior, gallantly. "I never met with so formidable an adversary, for with you I had two points to guard against all the while—your skill as a player and the battery of your bright eyes."

Maud blushed, but she was glad when the game was got through and she felt at liberty to withdraw.

She stole through the hall to the library, which was quite at the other end of the house, only pausing to catch a breath of the cool evening air from an open window as she passed.

She had expected to find the library deserted, but Ernest Devonshire was sitting by the table, with an open book before him. He held out his hand to her with a frank, cheerful smile.

"I shall soon think my wishes are potent, Miss In-

gestre," he said. "I had just sent one after you, and here you come in answer to it."

"I was not aware that the library was occupied, or I should not have intruded," she stammered, in some confusion.

"It strikes me that you are misconstruing the meaning of that word 'intrude.' To intrude is to come where you are not welcome. You have not done that, Maud."

He spoke gravely and earnestly, looking down into her blushing face. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her thus familiarly, ever called her by her first name, Maud. The slow, tender way in which his lips lingered over the word told the whole story.

"You know that you could never come unwelcome into my presence, Maud," he went on, clasping her hand in a warm, eager pressure. "It is the wish of my life to always have you with me—to claim you as the other half of myself—my wife!"

His tones never relaxed their grave seriousness, though his fingers quivered over her own, and his breath fanned her cheek. Those tones thrilled through her whole being as those of mortal had never done before.

"My love for you has been growing ever since I knew you first. I am sure I have studied your character and disposition well, and I have found in you the perfection of my ideal of what true womanhood should be. It would be the height of bliss to claim you as my own. May I hope to do that, Maud?"

He had spoken earnestly, frankly. It was no time for maiden coyness or diffidence. His honest, simple avowal was deserving of a candid answer.

"You may. I do love you, Ernest," she said, in a soft whisper, lifting her eyes for a second to his own, and then dropping them suddenly to the floor, while a faint scarlet flushed over her face.

This simple avowal seemed to be all he cared for. He drew her to him, and held her there for a single instant, so that her heart beat fast and deliciously against his own, and then let her go, looking down at her, proud and smiling.

He detained her but a moment longer, merely to draw a circlet of gold from his pocket-book and place it upon her finger.

"It was my mother's ring," he said, half sadly. "It has been in our family for years, and you will find our seal upon it. I, but one person in the whole world would I part with it—to my betrothed wife!"

Maud received it as it had been given, as a sacred pledge of their affection for each other. Then he led her to the door, and they parted.

It was a singular love story to which the girl had just listened—singular only from the manner in which it had been told, for we all know that the story itself is as old as time. But it was like Ernest Devonshire for all the world—straightforward, earnest, and cold in calm, sincere tones. He was not one to deal in foolish rhapsodies, neither did he seek to detain her after having received the assurance of her regard. It was not a time for that. He recognized the rights of her other guests, and did not seek to infringe upon them.

Maud stole softly out, thinking to go direct to her room, for she wanted a moment in which to collect herself before mingling once more with the gay throng below. She was afraid of her tell-tale face just then, if the truth must be told.

In crossing the hall she met Magdalen, who was going towards the library. She would gladly have avoided her, but they were nearly face to face before she heard her step.

"How lovely you are looking to-night, Maud!" Miss Digby stopped to say. "I wonder where you stole that charming colour—you are blooming as a Hebe!"

She lifted her black eyes to the girl's face in sudden, half-suspicious scrutiny. "Maud turned from her gaze involuntarily, but in a moment had rallied herself.

"If I am Hebe, what shall we call you?" asked she. "The royal Juno, or a priestess of the sun?"

Magdalen laughed.

"Do not give too important a rôle; you know I could never sustain it. But your guests are waiting, fair Hebe, and I will not detain you."

She seized Maud's hand with mock deference, and raised it to her lips. Something glittered in the lamplight upon one of the white tapered fingers. Her keen eyes caught it, and remained fixed upon it for a single instant as if spellbound there. Then she dropped the hand suddenly.

"Adieu," she said, gaily. "Juno was a greater goddess than Hebe, so I shall not kiss your hand, after all. I must try and sustain my rôle, you know."

She smiled again, sweeping gracefully on to the library, as if she meant to borrow the bearings as well as the name of the fabled goddess.

But the meeting with Maud had prepared her to go through with what was to follow. It had made her

mistress of her position, and given her time to collect her forces as best she might. She passed but a moment outside the library door, and then went in, drawing her breath hard once or twice, between her shut teeth. Ernest Devonshire was standing at one of the low windows, looking out, but he immediately came forward as she entered the apartment.

"A thousand pardons!" she cried, affecting a start, as her eyes fell upon him. "I imagined that the library was quite deserted."

She had gone there on purpose to meet this very person.

"You are welcome, at all events, Miss Magdalen." "So you say, being too gallant to confess anything else. But I wonder if you have been spending all your evening in this quiet place. You must have enjoyed yourself."

"I have," he replied, seriously. "Indeed, this has been the happiest evening of my life without exception."

She was silent a moment, looking at him a little curiously. Perhaps she was also revolving her own position in her mind. At any rate she determined to strike a direct blow in her next remark. She knew she had a revelation to make to her, and now meant to take the confession out of his mouth. It would seem less as if she had more than a friend's interest in the man beside her.

"Indeed!" she began, with a meaning smile. "The mystery begins to clear itself. I wonder that I had not mistrusted sooner. I met Maud in the hall just now, blushing like some June rose. Has she been the companion of your exile?"

"Yes"—he spoke frankly, looking her full in the face. "I thought a long time since that you had suspected my secret. I would gladly have told you sooner where my affections had been bestowed, but you never seemed to give me an opportunity. We are such old friends that I knew you would rejoice in my happiness."

"Of course, Mr. Devonshire. But you would hardly have kept your secret so well had I not felt pretty thoroughly convinced in my own mind that Leonard Harding was the favoured individual with our brown-haired Maud. What absurd mistakes people will sometimes make!"

"It is strange that you should have made one of that kind, Magdalen. Mr. Harding is not a person Maud could especially fancy. It must be that you are not very deep in her confidence."

"Oh, no," she said, affecting deeper seriousness. "I suppose it is all my fault though. You know I was always very self-sufficient and reserved myself. That may have kept Maud at a distance. Besides, she has other confidants—her mother and Miss Dean."

He seemed to take but very little notice of her reply. Perhaps he did not hear it even.

"I have long felt this love for her growing in my heart, but it has never been confessed until to-night. I feared for her, though, though before so much was confessed in words. I wished to tell you of this, Magdalen, because of the past, in which we have been like brother and sister to each other. You told a place second to Maud's alone in my heart."

He had approached and taken her hand. She turned her face suddenly. Why need he have spoken just then of that past, of which the memory even was treasured in her heart at that very moment as something so testimentally precious? For a single instant her lip quivered, and she grew pale; but she had too much at stake to betray herself.

"I hope you will be happy, Ernest," she said, gliding silently by the "brotherly" attachment of which he had spoken. "I am sure you will be, for Maud is a noble woman. But come, you have made me your father-confessor, and now for a penance I shall take you back to the parlour with me."

She glided quickly out at the door, motioning for him to follow, in her gayest and most impetuous manner.

He did so, though rather reluctantly. He would gladly have said more to her of his new-found happiness, as Magdalen was well aware, but she felt in no mood to listen.

So she led him on, chatting gaily and carelessly as they went. To have looked at her sparkling face you would ever have suspected all the mad rage and fury that was even then seething in her heart.

Aunt Barbara had left the "old maid's retreat" when they entered the parlour, and was turning over a book of engravings at the centre table. She looked up at them a little anxiously, as Magdalen was not slow in observing.

"She is afraid I am interfering with the plans of her darling," she muttered, under her breath, and straightway threw as much embarrassment as she was able into her manner towards Mr. Devonshire, for the mere gratification of annoying Aunt Barbara, was the most cordially detested.

But she could not play at this game for any length of time, for her companion soon caught sight of Maud,

and hastened to her side, with a half-muttered apology to Magdalen as he left her; and the latter had the satisfaction of seeing the girl's cheeks flush and her eyes light up, as he approached, and of knowing, moreover, from his manner, that he had been as observant as herself of these unmistakable evidences of the light in which Maud now held him.

Aunt Barbara had also been on the alert, and now looked somewhat relieved, for she more than mistrusted the sentiments with which her niece had learned to regard Mr. Devonshire.

After that Magdalen Digby was unnaturally gay and brilliant. It was the only way in which she could conceal the misery that seemed to be killing her by degrees, as it were. She tried to find Mr. Harding, to tell him of the engagement between Mr. Devonshire and Maud, but he was nowhere to be seen, and finally, in answer to the inquiries she ventured upon, some one told her that he had left some time before, having been sent for by one of his patients.

It would have been a relief to have had a long conversation with him, in which she could have found an escape-valve for her pent-up emotions; but that gratification was denied her. Therefore she still kept a hidden deep within her turbulent heart, wondering sometimes, when they were fiercest, why she did not go mad then and there, and gnash her teeth, and tear at the ebony masses of her hair. She felt wicked enough to do that or anything else that was desperate.

She was heartily glad when the last guest had gone, and the house sank into quiet. Then for more than an hour she lay prone upon the floor in her own room, with the key securely turned against all intruders, fighting with the sharp pain that seemed tearing at her vitals. As matters were she was glad to lie there in the night and darkness—she knew it would make her braver and stronger to meet the future; or, if not stronger at least more callous, and above all more entirely mistress of herself. And this was what she wanted and determined to obtain—self-command!

She descended to the breakfast-room the next morning, looking jaded and pale, and feeling a thousand times more miserable than she looked. Nor did the sight of Maud's rosy and smiling face as she sat opposite serve as a balm for the agony she could not wholly conceal.

"What is the matter, Magdalen?" asked Mrs. Ingestre, from behind the tea-tray, her voice betraying genuine solicitude. "Are you quite well this morning?"

"Quite, thank you, madam, with the exception of a slight headache, which is not worth minding. It will wear off soon, I think."

Miss Dean was seated at Mrs. Ingestre's right hand. She turned suddenly, eyeing Magdalen with some curiosity.

"I suppose you attribute it entirely to late hours, and last night's dissipation," she said, very quietly. "Certainly, that seems the most probable explanation."

"Perhaps it does," speaking with some significance, "but I always thought you remarkably exempt from the effects of late hours; you generally come out as fresh and rosy as Maud has done. Did you ever see her look more blooming?"

Miss Dean's manner was quiet enough, but there was a sparkle in her eyes that spoke to Magdalen of a deeper meaning than the words themselves conveyed. She understood it, and nerved herself instantly for the conflict if there was to be one.

"She is irresistible as usual. It is useless to praise Maud to you or Mrs. Ingestre. She seems happy, and must have enjoyed herself last evening more than I did."

Maud blushed until her face was rosier than ever. "I did have a very pleasant time," she said. "It was the most delightful company I have met with for a long time."

Miss Dean looked across the table at Magdalen. The latter seemed to take this look as a sort of malicious defiance, for she immediately became gay and talkative, meeting Aunt Barbara's keen scrutiny without flinching, skillfully parrying her covert thrusts, so that her sharpest words—for she seemed inclined to be more than usually severe with Magdalen this morning—rattled about her ears as harmless and futile as spent balls. It was a kind of skirmishing in which the elder lady soon felt herself at a disadvantage and was glad to abandon finally, for she clearly saw that she was likely to be worsted.

As they arose from the table Mrs. Ingestre drew Magdalen into her own dressing-room, placing a chair for her at one of the windows.

"I have a word to say to you, my dear," she began, a little nervously, "something that you must know sooner or later, and I can tell you better than Maud could."

She paused as if at a loss.

"Well, madam?"

Magdalen crossed her hands in her lap, the very picture of meek and quiet attention.

"You have been so long a member of our household that you quite seem like one of the family," Mrs. Ingestre went on, after a pause. "Indeed, I have come to regard you almost in the light of a second daughter. May I speak plainly to you as I would to a child of my own?"

"Certainly. I shall be glad to have you do so," elevating her eyebrows the least bit in the world.

"It is about—about Ernest Devonshire!" Mrs. Ingestre spoke now with considerable effort. "I have been afraid, sometimes, that you cared more for him than you ought—that he was dearer to you than a mere friend!"

Magdalen got up slowly, crossing over and kneeling beside Mrs. Ingestre's chair.

"I see how it is," she said, quietly. "You have thought that I loved him! I do, but only as a benefactor, a very dear friend. He has done so much for me, you know. He was my friend before I came here to Thornycroft Grange—my friend when I could claim but very few! I owe everything to him, even the privilege of living here with you. He is my brother and as such I care for him. I could not love an own brother better."

Mrs. Ingestre breathed a sigh of relief.

"I am glad it is no different, and now I will tell you why, Magdalen. Maud came to me this morning to tell me of a new happiness that had crowned her life. She and Ernest love each other—they came to an understanding last night. I was really afraid that you cared for him in the same way. I should not like to see you and Maud rivals, you know. That is why I have spoken to you."

Magdalen was silent a moment. When she finally spoke her tone was half-sarcastic.

"I suppose we are indebted to Miss Dean for the origination of such an absurd idea," she said, energetically. "Old maids are wonderfully far-seeing in such matters, though I really wonder that a person of Miss Dean's abilities should not be gifted with a more subtle instinct of penetration."

She arose while speaking, sweeping across the room in her old, haughty manner.

"To be sure Barbara did first suggest the suspicion," admitted Mrs. Ingestre, with some hesitation, "but it was with the best of motives. We were discussing it this morning, early, Barbara, Maud, and I. I could not but give credence to her suspicion when you came down to the breakfast-table looking so ill. I am very glad we were both mistaken."

"I only regret that you should ever have thought of anything of the sort," said Magdalen, hurriedly, her back to the light. "I have long known where Ernest's affections were bestowed. I was not so sure of Maud. Mr. Harding, the young surgeon, has been extremely attentive to her of late, you know."

"An attention which my daughter has always resented, and would gladly have had withdrawn," exclaimed Mrs. Ingestre, quickly. "But that is neither here nor there. She and Ernest are now engaged, and with my perfect approval also!"

"I wish them every imaginable happiness. But if this is all you have to communicate, I will now withdraw. My headache is really worse instead of better, and I wish to retire to my own room."

"Stay! Let me ring for Jenny. She shall make you something to take for it—and I will sit by you and bathe your head, if you will lie down."

Magdalen pulled her hand away from the bell-ropes, rather impatiently.

"Oh, no, Mrs. Ingestre. I am better as I am than I should be under Jenny's dosings. I only want a little rest and quiet."

She passed out quickly, as if resolved to end the conference there, bowing a very courteous adieu to Mrs. Ingestre as she went.

"The senseless idiots!" she muttered, with flashing eyes, as she crossed the passage to her own room. "They would trample my heart in the dust as remorselessly as that of some dog cringing at their feet! But it is all for that baby-faced Maud! Nothing is too good for her. My Lady Ingestre would gladly send me on a pilgrimage to Mecca, barefoot and penniless, if she could serve the interests of her delectable daughter by so doing. But n'importe! If they think I am going to submit quietly they are very much mistaken in Magdalen Digby!"

A sneering smile played about her red lips. On entering her own apartment she paced backwards and forwards for a few moments as if in earnest thought, but finally seated herself at the open desk and dashed off a few hasty lines. These she carefully folded and sealed, and then arose and pulled the bell-ropes. The servant who appeared in answer to the summons was Lusette, a gay, dashing French woman, who held the position of waiting-maid to Maud and Magdalen.

"So it is really you, Lusette?" she asked, looking around as the girl made her appearance. "I am glad,

for had it been one of the other servants I should surely have sent for you. I want a faithful messenger to go on an errand for me; I must have some one I can trust—some one who will do my errand and keep a quiet tongue in her head."

"You know that I will do just as you tell me, mam'selle, and I can keep a secret too."

Magdalen looked the girl straight in the face a moment as if trying to intimidate her.

"It will be well if you do, Lusette," she said, impressively, "otherwise it might be my duty to bring up some old matters that you might not care to have reach Mrs. Ingestre's ears. You are probably well aware to what I refer."

Lusette turned pale.

"Don't say another word, mam'selle," she cried, imploringly. "You shall find me devoted to your interest; I will do whatever you wish."

"See that you do, Lusette, and all will be well with you. I have no desire to work you ill. All I wish of you is to take this letter to Mr. Harding. Steal out quietly, so that nobody will know of your errand."

Lusette took the letter.

"I will go directment," she said, glibly, gliding back to her broken French now that she was more at ease.

Magdalen watched her departure with a covert smile upon her lips. Here was at least one being whom she had under her thumb, and now she meant to keep her there. This French girl would make a very useful tool, on occasion.

In less than an hour Lusette was back again, bringing the same letter she had taken away.

"What is the trouble? Why did you not leave my note?" Magdalen asked, in some trepidation.

"I thought you might prefer to keep it by you, mam'selle. Monsieur Harding is away, and will not be back again until Tuesday next. He was called away on some important business early this morning. I think he has gone to London."

Magdalen uttered an exclamation of dismay. This note contained a request for an immediate interview. Her scheming mind needed the active co-operation of his. Now everything must be deferred, and she must bear in silence still longer the misery that was tearing at her heart.

"Vexations!" she muttered, her brow wrinkling into an angry frown.

And then, suddenly seeming to recollect the presence of the maid, she resumed, more calmly:

"That will do, Lusette. You may go now. I am glad, though, that you brought back the letter, instead of leaving it."

(To be continued.)

MATTIE HARDEN.

"Do not turn away so coldly, Mattie; you have a noble heart, and I know you love me. If I were rich you would not refuse my request. I have your heart, none can gain that from me; but I had hoped that you would give me some word of love and encouragement before I leave my native land for five long years."

"You ask quite too much, Jerome; you are a dear friend, and I admit that I shall miss you, but my mother is a very proud, ambitious woman, and my father—"

"Yes, Mattie, I understand all that; our positions, as regards wealth, are vastly different; all I have hoped or asked is, that if, after years of toil and waiting, I shall have amassed a fortune, and retained an untarnished reputation, you will then grant me a reciprocation of the truest love man ever offered to woman. May I not hope, my darling?"

"Really, Jerome, I do not choose to bind myself; as I have said before, you ask too much." And the proud, beautiful heiress turned coldly from the pure-hearted, noble-minded young man, who was her inferior only in that false estimation of equality which measures its subjects according to reputed wealth.

Thus, without receiving one word of love or kindness, Jerome left the palatial roof which sheltered the dearest object of his life. Mattie sought her own room, to shed bitter, burning tears over an idol which she had sacrificed at the altar of pride. Like Herodias's daughter, she had been "before instructed by her mother; had been forbidden to unite her destiny with that of a poor man."

"Wealth is happiness," her proud mother often averred. "Never marry a man beneath your own station, my dear. Your exceeding beauty must raise you in the social scale. Cupid's arrows should be well tipped with gold as well as feathered with affection. Love is well enough in its place, but really it is only a second-ry consideration. Make your choice first, my darling, and love will come in its course."

Still, with all this injudicious training, Mattie Harden was a noble girl. She had known and loved

Jerome Moon from childhood; he had been her beau ideal of manliness ever since she could remember; some of the happiest hours she could recollect were spent in leaning on his arm while he taught her to guide her inexperienced foot, on skates, over fields of ice. Then, when summer came, they had their rambles through the park together, gathering flowers, feeding the fishes and young birds in their nests, or shooting pretty little arrows high in air from the trusty little ash-tree bows which Jerome fashioned with much skill.

Then, when childhood had blossomed into youth, they had their studies together, and long, hard, but loving strifes for the highest scholarship. Thus, from intuition, two congenial minds and souls had unconsciously learned to love; but time flies and brings its changes. Jerome was sent early to a distant academy to take a thorough course, while Mattie entered a seminary for ladies in their native town.

It was upon this separation that Mrs. Harden first noticed and feared the result of this attachment. She contrived to send her daughter away during the occurring vacations, till at last three years had passed, in which time the young friends had never met. Even the pleasant little letters which Jerome had at first sent to his "dear school-mate" had been withheld, and during all this time her mother's counsel, and a consciousness of neglect from Jerome, served to weaken and lessen Mattie's regard for one who had been dear as a brother.

But an ardent lover does not easily relinquish his object; and when he returned to his home it was only to renew his acquaintance with Mattie, and, as we have seen at the opening of our story, to declare himself a constant lover, and to ask for a few words of hope and love ere he left his native land to seek his fortune across the wide sea.

"Faithful in life or death I shall ever be," resolved Jerome, as he went with a sad heart from Mattie. "She loves me—I know it; she will never marry another. But why must I always suffer so? Why could she not have uttered some word of hope to cheer me in this struggle from poverty to wealth? May Heaven bless me in my honest, earnest efforts. Farewell, Mattie, Mattie!"

"Oh, what deceitful things are lips!" gasped Mattie, when alone. "How we women school ourselves to hide our hearts and every noble, generous impulse of our natures! How cold and cruel my lover sees me, while within my heart is burning, breaking! What would I not give to redeem the past hour! Oh, wealth, how I hate it! and position—what a falsity! Nobler far art thou, Jerome, than I who am so false. May Heaven grant me some opportunity in life to make reparation for this sad hour."

If Mattie had not been fully conscious of her great love before she surely was now. But it was too late! too late!

Five years! how long the time looks to the youth and maiden, yet how quickly it flies! and who can foretell the changes?

I had been married two years to a rising young lawyer when we removed to London.

Among the young ladies whom I met was Miss Harden, who had for a year been engaged as preceptress of the public school in our neighbourhood. I had never seen the lady before, but I disliked her, for I had heard her history from my husband. He had told me of his cousin—Jerome Moon—of his love for the beautiful Miss Harden, and of the hauteur with which she had met his offer of love. I had known Jerome some years and loved him as a brother. I therefore understood his worthy, sensitive nature, and realized the pain he had for years suffered on her account, and still suffered daily. Then how could I but hate her who had so deeply wronged my husband's cousin? Why could not he despise her as I did? What was she that he should still be entranced by her?

I had determined to be a constant "thorn in her side," but when I saw that face so sad, and beheld the most striking beauty, and noted the superior intellect, then and not till then could I understand Jerome's devotion at her shrine. I instantly lost my hate while admiration for a time took its place. Instinctively I knew that she was suffering keenly and deeply. I was prepared to meet a serious young lady, for, not a year previous, she had lost both her parents and her wealth by a single stroke. Had she not been obliged to give up a life of ease and luxury for one of toil and dependence?

Nobly had she taken up her thorny cross, and faithfully laboured, gaining much credit for her ability as an instructress. But I was surprised to meet a young lady who never smiled even in her most pleasing moods. A deep gloom overshadowed her young life. My interest soon deepened into friendship, and, as time passed, I was surprised to find how deeply we loved each other, and it was consequently arranged that she should take up her abode with us.

One day my dear husband, returning from his office, brought a letter.

"It is from Cousin Jerome," he explained, placing it in my hands. "He is well, and succeeding even better than he anticipated."

I turned to Miss Harden, who sat reading at the window.

"It is a letter from India," I began, "from the wealthiest young man I know. He is my husband's cousin—Jerome Moon. How I wish you might know him!"

"Is Jerome Moon your cousin?" she exclaimed, with sudden wonder.

Then the thin lips grew white and bloodless, and we tenderly lifted the fainting form and laid it upon the nearest sofa, summoning the nearest medical assistance. An hour later she opened her beautiful brown eyes, but her strength did not return for many days. Intuitively I knew the secret of her sad life. She loved Jerome Moon even as he loved her.

Two years later Jerome Moon had returned from India a wealthy man. His bright talents were acknowledged while he was poor, but now that fortune had lent her smiles his entrance upon life was thoroughly successful. Courtied in the first and oldest circles, and by the most intriguing mammas, and fluttered about by all the butterflies of fashion, still his occasional visits to our pleasant home were his only hours of real enjoyment.

Miss Harden was still a teacher in the same school; but Jerome's devotion to her was unavailing.

"I can never be your wife, Jerome," she said, upon the day of his return from India, when he had entreated her to give up her life of toil and share his affluence. "We might have been happy had it not been for my false pride. We have now changed spheres; you are wealthy and courted, while I am almost penniless. My pride is now a more formidable enemy than ever. I cannot insult your manhood by presuming upon your love. If you were only poor, it might be different; but now there is no hope. I shall never be your wife."

"My darling, do not say that. Eight years we have now been separated, during which time, Mattie, I surely have learned my own heart. I have found myself thinking constantly of you. You have been my inspiration all these long years, in every project of my life. I have hoped against fear, all these years, that you still loved me as you did when a little girl. Oh, those years of happy, innocent childhood! Shall I never know peace and joy again in reciprocated love? Must my life plan prove a failure? Oh, Mattie, do not doom the man who loves you thus faithfully to a life-long despair!"

"Hush, Jerome; you break down every support to self-control. Never speak in those tones to me again, I pray you. I have marked out my path through life, and I must tread it alone. Should I marry you, Jerome, I should for ever hate myself, and ere long you, too, would learn to hate me. My very love forbids this union, for when I refused to love you because you were poor I became unworthy of your love. Seek in another what you have for ever lost in me."

"Mattie, your false pride—your decision in this matter—does poor justice to your superior intellect. Be my wife, and a lifetime of love and devotion to you alone shall prove to you that not the slightest degree of blame toward you shall attach itself to my memory of the past. I have suffered through your pride, but I shall never forget that you have suffered also."

"Jerome, these sentiments must cease. Do not let them rise to your lips again. Crush this unfortunate love from your heart. Let us be the friends we were in childhood if you will, but do not sue for more. Your happiness and mine depend upon this resolution."

Long hours Mattie sat at the south bay-window, watching the progress of the grand mansion they were erecting near by. The beauty of its architecture and the grandeur of its proportions attracted every one, but to Mattie it had a deeper interest. It was Jerome's mansion, and designed for her; but as she watched its growth the same old look of determination would steal over the sad, pale face, and the lips become compressed by a more settled firmness. After its completion came the costly, elegant furniture, and then Mr. and Mrs. Hays took possession of their respective spheres as gardener and housekeeper, and Jerome removed his personal effects to his grand new home.

All the belles of his acquaintance smiled more sweetly than ever, and fathers as well as mothers of marriageable daughters grew more cordial and attentive. But all this was lost upon our hero. Though many bright stars shone he saw but one—one alone held his destiny, though it shed a faint, cold light. Yet still he hoped that he might gain power to climb into its more direct and warmer radiance. This was his only hope—his one desire.

It was a pleasant but warm afternoon when Mat-

tie and I were returning from a long ride. Our errand had been a charitable one—obtaining subscriptions for the new orphan asylum. Our list was well filled with the names of the best people of our acquaintance, and summed up to higher figures than we had even anticipated.

"One more call," said I. "We will get Jerome's subscription, and then rest for to-day."

"No, I do not want to go there; you know I have never been, and to-day my head aches from our long, warm ride. Do let us go home. You can run down after tea."

"Nonsense, Mattie! We are here now, and you are going in with me. Do not succumb to a slight headache," said I, gayly, unwilling to recognize any other motive for her unwillingness.

Mechanically she followed me to the house. I rang the bell.

"Is Mr. Moon in?" I asked of Mrs. Hays who instantly appeared.

"Yes, ladies. He is in his room; be seated, and I will call him."

"No, we will go to his room; we are in a hurry as we are on a business errand."

Then I took Mattie's arm and escorted her up the long, winding staircase, along the wide hall, and to the room which I knew was Jerome's private apartment. I tapped at the door, but no answer came. Then I opened it and stepped in, inviting Miss Harden to a seat with the complaisance of a hostess.

But she did not enter. Still she stood in the doorway, gazing with astonishment toward the farther end of the room. I followed the direction of her gaze, and beheld the most beautiful life-like portrait that I have ever seen. It was the life-size portrait of a lady, with clear, transparent complexion, glorious brown eyes, tasteful braids of soft, dark hair, and a most perfect forehead, mouth and chin, the whole imbued with the rare coldness and hauteur of expression that I had never seen save in the original, Mattie Harden herself. Then I heard a low cry of pain, and, turning quickly, beheld Mattie sinking, pale and lifeless, to the floor.

Before I could reach her stronger arms than mine supported her. Then Jerome, who had appeared from an adjoining room, carried her gently below stairs, and laid her upon the sofa in the parlour. When consciousness returned to the girl Jerome was still bending over her and administering restoratives. She waved him aside and attempted to rise, but her strength was insufficient and she sank back helplessly among the velvet cushions.

"Lie still, Mattie, till you are better," I advised. Then her eyes wandered around the room and from one object to another; the room, furniture, carpets, mantel and ornaments, were so very similar to those in her own lost girlhood home that tears filled her eyes, and for the first time in her life she realized the vastness of Jerome's enduring love for her.

"How do you like my home?" questioned Jerome, when at last her eyes sought his.

"Oh, it is all like a beautiful dream," was her reply.

"They why, Mattie, may I not, in the future, say our home? Stay with me always, will you not, my love?"

Then he bent lovingly and impressed a kiss upon the white forehead, while a velvety arm for the first time stole around his neck and she buried her face on his shoulder and sobbed aloud.

"Thank Heaven!" came from my heart as I extended a hand to each of them. "How I have longed to see this day! Mattie, I shall superintend everything to suit myself and you must not interfere. Remember your opinions are only a secondary matter."

Jerome gave a grateful smile, and Mattie did not speak even to remonstrate.

With as little delay as possible all the necessary arrangements were made, and truly can I say that of all the happy weddings I have ever attended this was the most supreme, the most truly spiritual.

Of course the disappointed, fashionable world was shocked, and talked wildly of Jerome's capture by a beautiful face, and how that the poor teacher had at last sacrificed her principle by marrying a man whom she had despised and rejected for years for the mere consideration of wealth and position. But we who know them both love and reverence them for their real worth, and think with loving indulgence even of Mattie's false pride, for surely her sufferings through this should prove sufficient atonement.

Therefore, oh, cruel world! grow charitable, for thou canst not read hearts. Appearances at best are a vain delusion. E. F. C.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.—Almost any error in life may be remedied save an error in marriage. If a man make a mistake in one thing, he can rectify it by doing right about another; if one mine be unpro-

ductive, or one field barren, he can try for gold in some fresh direction—it is competent for him to turn up the sods of distant acres, and plant and reap there; but to find you have chosen wrongly in marriage, is as when a man discovers, just as his sun is close upon setting, that he has erred through life. There is no retracing either road, there is no getting rid either of the spent existence or of the lawful wife; the day is gone, the decision made beyond recall; and unhappy indeed is he who finds that he has taken the wrong turning.

SCIENCE.

THE Secretary of State for India has offered a premium of £400 for the best machine, to be selected by competition, for weighing salt at the saltworks in Bombay.

THE London and North-Western Railway Company are making experiments with a view of ascertaining whether steel tubes can be substituted for copper ones in locomotive boilers.

THE quantity of iron made in the Charleroi district in 1842 was 20,000 tons. In 1852 the corresponding total was 37,325 tons; in 1862 it had grown to 112,290 tons; and in 1872 it was estimated at 250,000 tons.

THE IRON MINES OF ELBA.—There now seems to be some probability of the rich iron mines of the island of Elba being worked on a far larger scale than they have hitherto been conducted, as a convention has just been signed between the Minister of Finance and a society of Italian capitalists for leasing these mines from the Government for a term of thirty years.

THE PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.—Professor Raymond, president of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, wishes it to be generally known that preparations have been already commenced for holding an International Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876. The institute invites the "Iron and Steel Institute" of this country to visit America at that time, and extends its invitations to the scientific societies of Europe generally.

MUSTARD.—An elaborate report on the adulteration of mustard has been issued by Dr. Hassall, which is of scientific and practical importance. It is shown that genuine brown mustard has the following composition:—Water, 4.845; fixed oil, 35.701; myronic acid, 4.840, converted when the mustard is mixed with water into volatile oil; myrosin, 29.536; acrid principle, 3.533; cellulose, 16.765; ash, 4.725. From this analysis it appears that it owes its pungency and activity to the presence, in the first degree to the volatile oil, and in the second to the acrid principle; that white mustard has a somewhat similar composition, the principle difference being that it does not yield any volatile oil on mixture with water, but that it contains a larger proportion of the acrid principle.

GERMAN TORPEDO BOATS.—Three torpedo boats have been ordered by the German Government from the "Vulcan" Company instead of one, as originally contemplated. A number of very successful experiments have been made at Dantzig with some torpedo boats of a new kind. These boats are only 2 ft. high, have a very powerful engine, and carry a crew of four men. The torpedo, which is fastened to a moveable oak bar at the bows of the boat, has a very sharp spear of hardened steel, by means of which, directly the boat approaches the side of an ironclad, the torpedo is pierced into the hull of the vessel below the armour-plating. As the boat steams away from the vessel the torpedo is exploded by an electric current produced by reversing the engine. The author of this invention is Count Schack-Wittenau, a captain in the German Navy.

IRON.—The official report of the Vienna Exhibition gives the annual products of iron in the producing countries as follows:—England (1871), 131,664,277; Zollverein (1871), German Bund, 33,296,042; France (1871), 23,620,000; Belgium (1871), 11,406,480; Austrian Hungary (1871), 8,492,122; Russia (1871), 7,208,141; Sweden and Norway (1871), 6,138,347; Italy (1872), 1,474,180; Spain (1866), 1,474,180; Switzerland (1872), 150,000—total, 227,793,092. North America (1872), 46,900,000; South America, 1,000,000; Asia (Japan), (1871), 187,000; Asia (other countries approximated), 800,000; Africa, 500,000; Australia, 200,000—full total, 276,500,000. It will be seen by this statement that England produces more than one-half of the production of the world, North America about one-fifth, France about one-twelfth, and Belgium one twenty-fourth, these four constituting the great iron-producing countries of the globe.

CITY COMPANIES AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.—The Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness-makers offer for the year 1874 the following prizes for competition among persons engaged in the trade of coach-making, being clerks, foremen, workmen, or apprentices, natives of the United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Ireland, or any British Colony:—For freehand or mechanical drawing, applicable to carriages or parts of carriages, or the ornamentation thereof—1st prize, the Company's Silver Medal and 3*l*.; 2nd prize, the Company's Bronze Medal and 2*l*. For Practical Mechanics—1st prize, the Company's Silver Medal; 2nd prize, the Company's Bronze Medal. For drawings of Carriages or parts of Carriages to the scale of one inch to the foot—1st prize, the Company's Silver Medal and 3*l*.; 2nd prize, the Company's Silver Medal and 2*l*.; 3rd prize, the Company's Bronze Medal and 1*l*. Also in the examination in the technology of carriage-building, to be held by the Society of Arts—1st prize, the Company's Silver Medal and 3*l*.; 2nd prize, the Company's Bronze Medal and 2*l*.; 3rd prize, the Company's Bronze Medal and 1*l*.

PREVENTING COLLISIONS OF SHIPS AT SEA.—It seems to be more dangerous now than ever to go to sea, as vessels are so much more numerous, and sailing so much faster causes a great increase of danger. Is there not a remedy? I think there is. I believe the "Ville du Havre" and "Loch Eara" might still have been afloat if they had been provided thus: Put a chain of the same weight as the anchor chain round the ship outside, supported by iron brackets with rings in the ends of them to pass the chain through and keep it in place. These brackets or chain supports should be 18 inches long and from 1 to 4 feet below the main deck, according to size of ship, and about 8 feet apart. Large passenger steamers might have two such chains, one 1 foot below the main deck and the other 4 feet below it. Such ships, in colliding, would have to break or pass through the chains before making holes in each other's sides. Level with main deck have two beams, running out from 8 to 15 feet beyond the outwater, one on each side of outwater, 8 to 12 inches in diameter, so constructed that when they come against a vessel or any outside object they would yield and spring back slowly to within a foot of outwater.—F. J.

OZONOMETRY.—By allowing a series of sparks from an electro-magnetic induction apparatus to be discharged between platinum electrodes in perfectly dry air Böttger noticed the formation of yellow vapours; and after the lapse of a few minutes nitrous acid was recognized by the smell. If the sparks are passed through very moist atmospheric air, or if the sides of the glass vessel in which the experiment is conducted are moistened with distilled water, and some is allowed to collect at the bottom, no yellow vapours are formed; but the air in a few minutes acquires the characteristic odour of ozone, while in the water the presence of hyponitric acid can be detected. Iodide of potassium and starch paper, the test in common use for the detection of ozone in the air, is thus shown to be an untrustworthy agent; as it must in many cases turn blue by nitrous acid. It behoves meteorologists, now that their attention has again been directed to these facts by Professor Böttger, to ascertain the exact condition of moisture under which the acid is produced, and to establish a process for the estimation of ozone which shall be of absolute certainty. Dr. Dotch, who has for years occupied himself with the artificial generation of ozone, states that strips of paper saturated with the tincture of guaiacum afford a more sensitive and certain reagent, or test for the presence of ozone than either the iodide of potassium and starch or paper containing protoxide of thallium; and that such an ozonometer can be relied on to show at least ten gradations or shades.

THE GULF STREAM.—Mr. Isaac Fitch, delivering a lecture on the Gulf Stream, a short time ago, described the nature, course, and general features of the Gulf Stream, and in the course of his remarks he observed that there is a general impression that our winters are less severe than they used to be; but reliable observations of the temperature by the thermometer extend backwards but a comparatively short time. There is, however, historic evidence, which cannot be set aside, that such is the case, and, although it is doubtless partly owing to the effect of a more general cultivation of the land, it seems highly probable that the Gulf Stream has, in the main, been the cause of this change. It has been proposed by engineers—and no doubt will some day be carried out—to cut through the Isthmus of Panama, and form a channel sufficient to enable ships to pass through to the Pacific Ocean. Such a scheme, if carried out, would be as important in its results commercially as the Suez Canal, and it would be insignificant to influence, in any perceptible degree, the volume of the Gulf Stream. But if by some sudden convulsion of nature—and there have been some even in recent times along the west coast of South America of adequate magnitude—the isthmus were rent in twain, and a channel of sufficient dimensions formed to convey the whole volume of the Gulf Stream into the Pacific, the immediate effect would be the utter ruin of England. Our maritime commerce would be annihilated, our harbours frozen up during six months

of the year, our winter climate intolerable, and no tongue can tell the manifold miseries that would befall us on every hand.

CHEMICAL PRIZES.—The following are the prizes offered by the Société d'Encouragement for chemical discoveries, with the year in which they are to be awarded: Best commercial process for the preparation of oxygen gas, 2,000*l*.; 1874; industrial application of oxygenated water, 2,000*l*.; 1878; economical production and application of ozone, 3,000*l*.; 1875; fixation of atmospheric nitrogen, either as nitric acid, ammonia, or cyanogen, 2,000*l*.; 1876; manufacture from pyrites of sulphuric acid absolutely free from arsenic, 3,000*l*.; 1875; industrial employment of any abundant and cheap mineral substance, 1,000*l*.; 1875; utilization of waste products, 1,000*l*.; 1874; useful application of any of the newly discovered metals, 1,000*l*.; 1876; new applications of the non-metallic elements, 1,000*l*.; 1876; discovery of a new alloy useful in the arts, 1,000*l*.; 1876; artificial production of graphite, suitable for lead pencils, 3,000*l*.; 1877; artificial preparation of a compact black diamond, 3,000*l*.; 1877; discovery of processes of chemical transformation capable of yielding useful organic products, such as quinine, cane-sugar, etc., 4,000*l*.; 1877; artificial preparation of the fatty acids or of matters allied to wax, 4,000*l*.; 1874; a theory of steel based on reliable experiments and capable of being applied directly to the improvement of its manufacture, 6,000*l*.; 1878; disinfection of gas residues, 3,000*l*.; 1874; disinfection and prompt clarification of sewage, 1,000*l*.; 1875; ink not attacking metallic pens, 1,000*l*.; 1875; employment of boric acid and borax in the ceramic arts, 1,500*l*.; 1,000*l*.; and 500*l*.; 1875; extraction in France of the iodine contained in the South American sodium nitrate and in mineral phosphates, 1,000*l*.; 1876; industrial process for the manufacture of cast steel rails from common ores containing, like those of the collieries and the carboniferous, 0.5 to 1.5 per cent. of phosphoric acid, 3,000*l*.; 1876; establishment in France of a plant for complete treatment of nickel minerals and the preparation of pure nickel, 1,000*l*.; 1876.

WHO IS HE?

By the Author of "Lord Dana's Error," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CRAWLEY'S handsome, evil face darkened at Lady Calthorpe's words. All the venom in his malicious nature rose to the surface.

Lady Calthorpe had calculated rightly. By her revelation of his true birth, and the consequent hint of the spoils in store, she had infused into that cowardly, reptile nature an unnatural fire that was capable of urging him to just the sort of service she wanted of him now.

"How did he discover who he was?" Crawley demanded, bitterly.

"Does it matter?" responded Lady Calthorpe. "I don't think he has discovered positively. He cannot have any absolute proofs. But he may succeed in finding such. We don't know what he bases his claim upon. But we do know that it is really founded upon truth, and the only safe way that remains to us is to destroy beyond any possibility of resurrection the only positive witness—the true Maurice Champion can call to his identity."

"You mean his wife?" he said, half-sulkily.

"I mean Isabel Champion—yes. To-night must end all."

"The boy will remain even then," Crawley suggested, darkly. "His father has found him, doubtless. Lady Isabel was listening that night before we came away, and conveyed the information to Lord Champion. The woman you put in charge of her was an optimist. I have no doubt that Lady Isabel often listened to our conferences, and conveyed her knowledge thus gained to Lord Champion. Verner Ruble was out of town upon some mysterious errand before we came away. Depend upon it he has got the boy."

"Very well," responded Lady Cattie, in the same deadly voice. "When we have disposed of this one we will attend to the boy."

"What next?" he questioned, as low as Lady Calthorpe had spoken.

Lady Calthorpe bent and whispered in his ear. A sort of shudder rang through Crawley. His lips moved.

"It shall be done."

"There will be no slip this time as with Fatima."

"No!" with an oath.

"Had we not better go away?"

"How can you get away to-night? Beside, you would only excite suspicion instead of allaying it. It would be safer though to postpone the deed a couple of days."

"Why safer?" demanded Lady Cattie, hardly. "The safety lies in securing her silence—the sooner the safer for all of us."

"Why then doesn't Sir Robert there administer his own private remedy?"

"Because?"—Lady Calthorpe dropped her voice—

"that has been tried and has failed."

"When?" demanded Crawley, incredulously.

"While she was with Lord Champion Harvey Dorr gave it to her."

"I don't believe it. Why should it fall on her more than on the other?"

"There is now and then a temperament that resists its action. Is there not, Sir Robert?"

"Yes," Sir Robert responded, curtly.

He was whiter than his own handkerchief with which he was industriously wiping his face. Brave as he was naturally, there were some subjects which Sir Robert could never hear discussed without getting ashen about the mouth.

"Go away then and let me think," responded Crawley, with a sullen, evil light in his dark eyes. "I suppose there is no one to depend on now but me. He is a coward after all."

So overcome with that singular sensitiveness of his was Sir Robert that he did not heed this taunt. It is doubtful if he ever heard it, so anxious was he to get out of the room. He and Dick Crawley seemed indeed to have changed places.

Meanwhile, above stairs, Lady Isabel paced her prison and waited her doom.

At eightfall some one invaded the room in which she was.

It was Fatima bringing her supper.

The request looked a tempting one.

There were several epicurean dishes which Lady Isabel remembered had been favourites with her father. Fatima had evidently spent herself on this meal.

Lady Isabel was allured, in spite of her gloom.

"I wonder which dish is poisoned," she said to herself, bitterly. "I have heard that condemned men sometimes relish the last meal they ever take on earth the most keenly of any, and I am hungry."

Fatima fluttered forward.

"Eat without fear, my sweet one," she whispered.

"Fatima cooked every dish herself, and watched it. Be careful only of the wine."

Lady Isabel thanked her with a look. She could not trust to spoken words, and ate her dinner with relief.

Through a crack in the door, purposely left, Crawley watched her, to make sure that she drank the wine he had prepared with his own hand.

Fatima had guessed right. The wine was drugged. He drew back as Fatima came out with the dinner-tray.

"Take the wine back and leave it," he said, in a low voice, "she may like some after awhile. She looks low and nervous."

Lady Isabel had followed Fatima to the door. She made no attempt to pass through after her, but as she returned into the room in obedience to Crawley's orders she drew back and contrived to slip into her hand a scrap of paper, upon which she had just written Lord Champion's address.

Fatima silently concealed the paper in the sleeve of her dress.

An evil eye was watching them, but it did not see that tiny paper, and the evil eye did not catch the words Fatima dropped in passing Lady Isabel:

"Beware of the wine, or of sleeping to-night."

Lady Isabel was once more alone. She shuddered slightly as she repeated Fatima's warning. She felt stronger since eating, and with strength came hope and courage once more. She recalled every incident of the interview between herself and Crawley just before the unexpected arrival of Sir Robert and Lady Calthorpe. She remembered how he looked when he asked her what she would give to know that her husband was not the false and treacherous man she believed him to be.

She lifted the bottle of wine from the table, and, pouring some of it in a glass, smelled it.

"Is it poisoned, I wonder?" she thought; "if it is he'll soon be here to see if I've drunk it. I'll make him think I have."

She poured some from the bottle into her wash bowl, and left the glass standing half-full.

Her bed stood in a deep-curtained recess. She went and rolled up a portion of the bed-clothes and disposed them to look a little like a human form with the outer cover down over the head.

Then she concealed herself between the curtain and the wall at the foot of the bed and waited.

Two hours must have passed and then she heard a key turned in the lock of her door.

Crawley came in. He had evidently been drinking. He glanced once over the room, then he saw the half-filled wine-glass, and his red face turned suddenly to an ashy whiteness.

He stood full ten minutes staring straight before him. Then he moved with a stealthy, cat-like tread toward the recess in which the bed stood.

As he passed the lounge he took therefrom a large pillow, and the awful gleam in his cruel eyes as he looked toward the bed now froze the very blood in Lady Isabel's veins and made her flesh creep with horror and fear.

Where she stood she could see him through a slit in the curtain without herself being seen.

He came nearer.

The curtain at the head of the bed was looped slightly back. He did not lift it higher, not daring to let in more light lest he should wake the seeming sleeper.

Shifting the pillow he carried so that a hand was at either end, he crept slowly forward with a wicked, tiger-like movement, elevating the pillow as he approached the bed.

"He will discover the cheat in another moment," thought Lady Isabel, watching every movement, "and then what will become of me?"

Stepping now slowly, Crawley lowered the pillow he held by degrees till it almost touched the counterpane beneath where it seemed to cover a head.

Then, pausing, he seemed to be gathering his courage for the final struggle. So horrible was the expression of his wicked face, his eyes glazed so with the murder in them, that Lady Isabel involuntarily closed her own, unable to bear the sight. Her senses seemed about to forsake her. She would have fallen but that she held mechanically by the frame of the bed canopy.

When she looked again Crawley was upon the bed on his knees, holding the pillow down with both hands, and pressing upon it fiercely. But suddenly his head went up spasmodically, his gaze fastened in a sort of unearthly stare upon the opposite wall. At the same moment all his muscles gave place to relaxation, the fierceness and fury of his looks gave place to an expression of unutterable awe and fright.

His gaze riveted upon that invisible Thing, moved seemingly with it, following it across the head of the bed, turning as it reached the floor; and then, mechanically getting down and following after it with the dragging, unnatural step of one under the influence of another will than his own, he approached the door—which had, perhaps, been left ajar, for it opened of itself—and he went through without closing it behind him.

Lady Isabel looked on, speechless and transfixed. The door stood wide open—escape was before her; but a horrible magnetism seemed to chain her to the spot.

She made a movement at last to come out of her hiding. Ah, if she had but done so sooner!

The door was drawn together that moment by some one in the passage, and relocked.

CHAPTER XL.

VERNER RUBLE was again in London.

Never was a man so changed in so short a time. He looked older by ten years. In place of the intense melancholy which had formerly marked his expressive countenance was now a stern and relentless look, that strangely enough made him less like the impostor and more like that lost Maurice for whom Lady Isabel had claimed him.

Immediately upon his return he had a long and painful interview with his supposed uncle, the count. None could guess what had passed at that interview, and he told none. Not even Lord Champion or the Laird of Brenlan ventured to question him; but if anything could be told by the blanched and drawn face with which he went forth from the count's presence never more to enter if he must have endured tortures during that conference.

Lord Champion and the Laird of Brenlan boldly proclaimed their belief now that this was the lost Champion—the true Maurice—and fearlessly expressed to any who would listen that strange theory by which they arrived at so improbable a conclusion.

No legal steps were taken to prove what the Laird of Brenlan and Lord Champion so daringly asserted. Absolutely no legal proof was at their command. Complaint was, however, lodged in the proper quarter against "one Dick Crawley, falsely claiming to be Maurice Champion," for murder, and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Without a suspicion of what awaited him at the London terminus Dick Crawley was speeding toward his doom with the up express from Luddwynd. Sir Robert and Lady Calthorpe were with him. Lady Calthorpe certainly was as unconscious as he.

Sir Robert alone knew the truth. A trusty friend had telegraphed to them, and Sir Robert had been fortunate enough to secure the message. He knew who was coming, and exulted in the anticipation of being rid of this tool of his—he hoped for ever. He had always hated him while he used him, and since Lady Cattie had revealed the truth to her low-sired son, since he knew himself to be in law her direct heir before Sir Robert's children, he hated him with tenfold malignity and vindictiveness.

Crawley spoke little. He had a sickly, bleached look. If terror ever took bodily shape he was the embodiment of it as he stepped from the carriage at the terminus and faced those officers of the law who were waiting for him.

Sir Robert smiled like a demon behind his hand as he saw the policeman accost Crawley.

Then with assumed hauteur he challenged the officer in charge:

"What is it you are doing?" he demanded. "Why do you arrest so well-known a gentleman as Mr. Maurice Champion?"

"I arrest him for murder, Sir Robert," answered the man, respectfully. "He is also charged in the indictment with being an impostor. He is arrested as one Dick Crawley."

Crawley started wildly forward.

Sir Robert checked him, laying a warning hand on his arm.

"The charge is preposterous," said Sir Robert, boldly. "Murder and Maurice Champion could never in reason be named together."

"I am not here to discuss that, Sir Robert," the officer answered, respectfully, "but to serve a warrant upon this gentleman."

"What is that; what is it?" questioned Lady Calthorpe, pressing to her husband's side, from whom she had been momentarily separated, and consequently had caught but a fragment of what had been passing.

Sir Robert drew her forcibly away, but she caught the words of a bystander: "Arrested for murder," and, bad and cold-hearted as she was, the shock made her stagger.

Sir Robert hurried her to the waiting carriage and put her in. She looked back and saw Crawley's writhing and agonized face, and made an effort to return to him. But her husband would not let her.

"You can do nothing for him," he said, sternly. "You will only commit yourself."

When Crawley was conducted to his prison cell the one fact that appalled him most was that he was to occupy it alone. After what he had done to be left alone!

Sir Robert and Lady Calthorpe went direct to the London mansion which they now looked upon as their own, though they did not dare avow such a claim openly yet. Sir Robert assured his wife that Crawley was in no real danger, but he added, significantly:

"Should the worst come for him, Cattie, it rests with us to share his fate or escape it, as we choose. He is only an inconvience at any rate now."

Lady Cattie averted her face. Something that she did not herself know that she possessed stirred in her cold and worldly heart as Sir Robert spoke in this unfeeling manner of her son. Without looking toward her husband she said, in a low voice:

"No harm must come to him; he must be saved," she added, deliberately, "even if I have to avow the truth, own that other marriage, and acknowledge him openly as my son."

Sir Robert's cynical, effeminate face darkened unpleasantly.

"I gave you credit for being strong-minded, Cattie," he said. "I also I made a mistake. Do I understand that you are ready in your devotion to this young man to share the gallows with him?"

Lady Calthorpe shuddered and was silent.

Sir Robert was obstinately and malignantly bent on Crawley's destruction. The thought of where he was, so completely at his mercy, almost made him scream with joy. He had managed so cleverly that he thought there was no way of proving him cognizant of Crawley's crimes, and it would be comparatively easy to put him now where he would trouble him no more.

Let Verner Ruble prove himself Maurice Champion—that could not harm him or his now that Lady Isabel was out of the way and young Hugh disposed of. It remained only to rid himself of that infamous tool who had served his purpose so well. And the opportunity was at his hand. Should he let it slip? Never.

"Let him hang," he muttered to himself more than once, in the ensuing days, "let him hang."

Sir Robert and Lady Calthorpe were objects of keen interest and great favour in the wealthy and fashionable clique to which they belonged. The house was thronged with condolent and politic visitors.

Lady Isabel was missing!

It was said that her affectionate and anxious relatives had taken her to a retired estate of hers, known as Luddwynd, for her health. That while there she had developed unmistakable symptoms of insanity, and had repeatedly tried to take her own life. That in spite of all the watchfulness of her friends she had at last contrived to escape from them, and it was greatly feared had destroyed herself.

Detectives were scouring the country in search of her, but no trace had yet been found.

Meanwhile, as Lady Cattie Calthorpe was known to be the next heir to those immense estates, people were already fawning upon her with pretended condolences, which were in reality accepted as congratulations by Sir Robert and his wife.

The secret exultation of this infamous pair was great.

There remained in Sir Robert's triumphant path but one serious obstacle—Count Ruble.

He knew well that Count Ruble and his old creditor and servitor Elan were one. The ignorant, half-stultified giant had developed into a man under the teaching and companionship of his own and Sir Robert's outraged victim. Of late he had more than once sternly given Sir Robert to understand that the man they had both so wronged must have his rights restored to him. When the rumour came that Lady Isabel had destroyed herself he charged Sir Robert with having murdered her, and threatened to reveal all the villainy he himself knew him guilty of. In this case Sir Robert was afraid. Elan he knew could prove his assertions.

But all was safe yet, and he had gone through too much by this time to hesitate at so slight a matter as taking one life.

One morning the London papers chronicled the sudden and unaccountable death of Count Ruble. He had been found dead in his bed. There was nothing to indicate foul play, no marks of violence, or signs of poison. Nevertheless there were some who knew he had not died naturally.

"He has been murdered," said Count Ruble, sternly, and bitterly. "I know it!"

A will and some sealed papers were found, but the deceased had directed that these should not be examined for six months after his death.

The weeks wore on.

Lady Isabel Calthorpe had not been found nor any traces of her. Sir Robert had deliberately denounced Crawley as an impostor, though he refused to acknowledge Verner Ruble. He told an elaborate and clever story to account for his own deception as he termed it. We have not time to enter into the details of that tale.

Crawley had been arrested at the suit of the Laird of Brenlan. There were plenty of witnesses found to identify him as Dick Crawley. With these came the same old woman who had claimed Verner Ruble as her grandson. She had the sense to stay quiet till the identity was thoroughly established. Then she made an attempt to show whose son he really was. That not being the question pending, and all legal proof of the relationship between Lady Calthorpe and this man having been carefully destroyed, Sir Robert was able to silence her talk as the foulest and falsest insinuations.

The attempt to murder the Laird of Brenlan was proved without difficulty. The actual murder of poor Bessy Craven at Dorset was proved by circumstantial evidence, the most conclusive of which Sir Robert furnished. Crawley was found guilty on these two charges and duly sentenced—to death. Popular feeling was high against him.

Sir Robert had instilled an impression that Lady Isabel had been driven insane by him, and next it began to be suspected that he had murdered her also.

Lady Calthorpe did not make her appearance in public during all the time of the excitement concerning Crawley and his trial. Nor was any one permitted to see her who called. She was said to be confined to her own apartments with severe and dangerous illness.

The night before that morning on which he was to have been hung Dick Crawley contrived somehow to break prison.

At that very moment, when Sir Robert, seated in the sumptuous library of the London mansion, was congratulating himself that he was so near the aim of all his wicked scheming, Dick Crawley, with gaunt and desperate looks, was creeping toward him through by-ways and unlighted, crime-peopled haunts. The man was too miserable almost to wish to live. The ghosts of his murdered victims had haunted him till he was almost willing to die, if he could get rid of those horrible, reproachful, spectral eyes.

One desire, however, still animated him—the longing for revenge upon Sir Robert Calthorpe.

Sir Robert was slowly pacing the elegant room, and beguiling the time, or trying to do so, with brilliant anticipations of that dazzling future he believed was dawning upon him.

He was very happy, of course; but a strange restlessness that was certainly akin to misery beset him to-night. Was it a presentiment?

"Tush!" he murmured, shaking himself as if he would thus banish some unwelcome thought, "no such thing can happen now. I am safe—safe! I shall have money—money!"



[SIR ROBERT IN DANGER.]

He said the last words aloud, and a sound like a demon laugh echoed them.

Sir Robert wheeled like lightning.

The next moment he barely suppressed a cry of horror, and was forced to lean against the wall for support.

It was Dick Crawley, the base accomplice he had used and then treacherously betrayed, who stood before him. He had come in by means of a latch-key he had retained through all his late vicissitudes.

The face upon which Sir Robert looked seemed scarcely human, so distorted and changed was it with malevolence and rage.

There was no mistaking the deadly threatening of that livid countenance. Sir Robert glanced wildly at the door.

"It is locked," hissed Crawley, showing the key.

He turned involuntarily toward the bell-rope.

It came off in his hand. Crawley had cut it outside the room. He grinned horribly in the terrified baronet's face.

"It's my turn now," he said, with a murderous glance.

Sir Robert's blood seemed to freeze in his veins. In that instant, while he stood facing palely his would-be-murderer, his mind flashed over his danger and his chances, and his entire expression changed.

"My dear fellow," he said, in a sycophantic, conciliating voice, "are you mad? You would not destroy the only man who can possibly save you from the gallows, would you?"

Crawley sneered again.

"You save me?" he cried. "Haven't you done your best to hang me? Ah, I know you. You thought it was a capital way to be rid of me, but I'm not going to perdition alone."

He glared at the baronet again evilly, and pulled from inside his waistcoat a long, sharp, bright knife, which he flashed in Sir Robert's eyes with malignant passion.

"I stole it from a butcher's shop as I came along," he said, with a hoarse and dreadful chuckle. "I see you guess what for!"

The baronet suppressed a shudder.

"I had arranged everything for your ultimate safety," he said, with an effort; "but if you are bent on killing me, go on, and see what comes of it."

Crawley half-lowered his wicked-looking knife.

"I don't believe you," he said, slowly. "Didn't you keep away from me and swear yourself to things that were against me? You know you did your best to ruin me."

"My dear fellow," said Sir Robert, eagerly, "that was just a clever trick of mine. I could not prove

your innocence directly, so I disarmed the jury and public opinion by pretending to be your enemy, so that they should not mistrust me when I accused another of what they were trying you for."

"Another?"

"Another—that other whom you so much resemble. Ah, I had everything so cleverly arranged. You should have stayed in prison to see how cleverly I was going to take you out. Everything is ready to show positively that he whom you resemble so is the guilty one instead of you."

Crawley stared irresolute, doubting, yet with such a longing for life in his own soul, such a wish to believe, that he was half-persuaded against his own conviction of the absolute falseness of Sir Robert.

"Where is my mother?" he demanded, suddenly. "Why did she disown me after the story she voluntarily told me?"

"Lady Calthorpe is very ill," said Sir Robert, in a hypocritical voice. "Grief, excitement and anxiety have driven her to the borders of the grave."

"Take me to her."

Sir Robert whitened again.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "It would kill her in the critical state in which she is."

Crawley eyed him darkly.

"I don't believe a word you say," he said, threateningly. "Lead me to her, or show her to me ill as you say, and I'll believe the rest of it. If you can't do that—if you don't do it, I'll know what to do."

Sir Robert reflected a moment.

"Perhaps, if I get him out of this room," he said to himself, "I may be able to summon help."

"Come then," he said, coldly, "you shall see her."

Crawley drew a stout cord from his pocket.

"I must tie your hands first," he said, "and stop your mouth."

He had read Sir Robert's thoughts and hope.

The baronet's countenance fell.

"You shan't do that," he said.

"Very well, then I will kill you at once!" showing his knife again.

With a groan Sir Robert submitted.

Taking the knife between his teeth Crawley proceeded to tie him, watching him closely. Sir Robert suddenly threw himself against him with all his strength.

The next moment the two men were grappling each other upon the floor. The knife had been flung some distance from either. Crawley was the stronger, however. He soon had Sir Robert at his mercy again, and, forcing him upon his face, he knelt upon him and deliberately tied his hands fast behind him. Then

knitting Sir Robert's own handkerchief he was about

to tie it across his mouth, when there was a sound as of a key being inserted in the lock of the library door and turned.

Crawley sprang for his knife, his face growing livid at the thought of being interrupted before he could secure his vengeance.

Sir Robert started upright at the same moment.

The door swung open, and with a horrible cry Crawley, after one crazy stare in the face of the figure thus revealed, dropped senseless upon the floor.

Sir Robert was scarcely less appalled.

He beheld one whom he had had every reason, as he supposed, to believe dead. He beheld his wife's wronged and outraged niece—Lady Isabel Champion.

He did not for an instant imagine, as Crawley so evidently had, that he looked upon a ghost. It was almost as bad as being murdered by Crawley to find this queenly, indomitable, and injured woman alive yet to defy and circumvent him.

Not even toward the insensible villain upon the floor did Lady Isabel entertain such emotions of aversion as toward Sir Robert Calthorpe. She approached him.

"Will you come with me into another room?" she said, slightly glancing at the unconscious figure upon the floor.

Sir Robert bowed his assent nervously, and followed her in silence from the room in which his would-be murderer was. As they went out she turned the key upon him.

Lady Isabel led the way to an apartment, opposite the library—a sort of waiting-room.

Sir Robert entered after her. She closed the door and locked it, taking out the key. Sir Robert observed this latter movement with some wonder, and a little misgiving. But what could he have to fear from a woman?

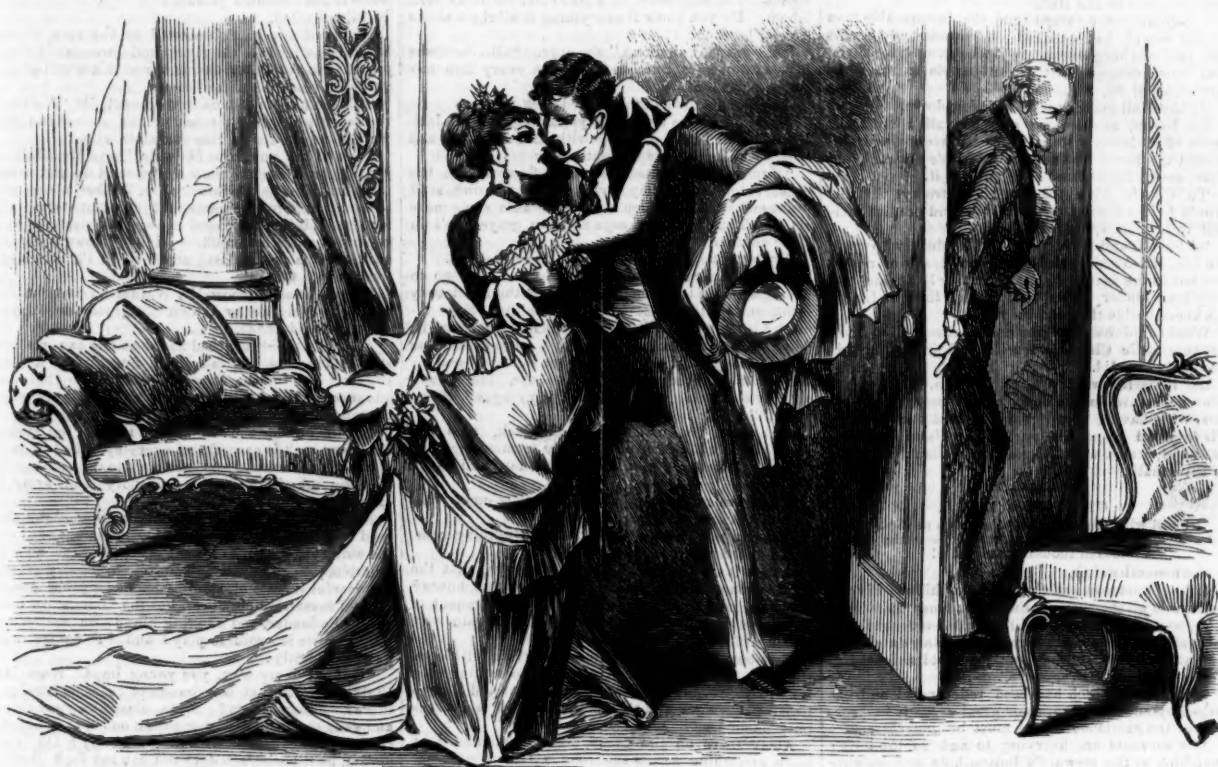
"You don't know the relief it is to me to behold you alive, Isabel," he began, hypocritically. "Will you be kind enough to untie my hands, which that demon, who has so deceived us all—"

My lady's black eyes flamed, and she stamped her foot slightly. But without speaking she released his hands, and then taking from her bosom a folded paper wrapped with silk and carefully tied with white ribbon, spread it out upon a table. Then, signing for him to approach, she pointed with one white, slender finger to it.

Sir Robert started violently and shuddered.

He had not killed Elan soon enough. He had left behind him a written confession of everything, and this was it.

(To be continued.)



[SIR RALPH SHUTS THE DOOR.]

FATE.

By the Author of "Nickleby's Christmas-Box,"
"Maurice Durant," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LXI.

For a season all things are clouded and unreal.
Fate turns the wheel of life with changeful hands.

To return to the Hall. With the men servants rushing about in every direction, the women weeping and wailing over the body of Lady Melville, and Clarence in a dull stupor of grief by her side, Claude Ainsley had need of all his presence of mind.

As for Sir Ralph he could do nothing more than endeavour to console Lillian, who stood gazing first at Clarence and then at the motionless form which the servants were raising in their arms to be carried upstairs.

To the young girl this fresh trouble seemed more bitter than the first, for was not the man she loved in sorrow and absolute peril?

"Oh, papa, let me cry!" she said, in answer to his entreaties that she would cease weeping and come with him. "Don't you see that my heart would break for him if it was not for these tears? Leave him! No! He did not leave us in our trouble and I will not leave him. You do not want me to go, do you, Clarence?" she asked.

"Yes, go," he said, starting and turning his face away from her pleading eyes. "Take her, sir, I am not fit to be near her. Do you forget what I am?"

Sir Ralph shook his head gravely and coloured. "Heaven help us all!" he said. "I have just heard you are my own nephew and owner of the title and estates I hold."

"A thief's accomplice, a forger, and soon—a felon. Take her away, sir; I love her too much to taint her with a prisoner's dock!"

At these bitter words of self-condemnation Lillian was like to faint, but she would not leave his side, and she followed him to the door of the room where Lady Melville was laid.

There she left him, seating herself outside, and with gentle determination expressing her intention of following him if he need be to the grave.

Then came fresh confusion.
Mr. Claude Ainsley had no sooner superintended Lady Melville's removal, and ordered the blinds of the house to be drawn down, then a brace of servants burst into the hall with the detective at their head.

"Mr. Ainsley, I believe," said the detective, touching his forehead, and speaking with a vain attempt at business-like composure.

"I am Mr. Ainsley," said Claude.

"I want Sir Ralph's permission to use the stables," said the officer. "Our man's got away, sir, and unless it's a warm chase will give us the slip altogether."

"Escaped!" said Sir Ralph, coming into the hall. "Impossible!"

"Nothing impossible to such eels as that fellow!" said the detective. "He gave me the slip with the bank forgeries, he's dodged 'em over in Paris half a dozen times, and unless I run him down now we shall lose him for ever."

"Anything, everything, is at your disposal," said Sir Ralph, passionately, "and I will give a thousand pounds to the man who secures him."

The detective's eyes brightened, and while one of the grooms ran round to select the best horse he sank into a chair and drank a huge jugful of ale.

"I've heard all about things up here!" he said, addressing Claude Ainsley. "It's a shocking turn out, but I knew there'd be fearful mischief if that fellow was at it! Oh, he's a rare 'un, I can tell you; there isn't such another for pluck and daring and outeness in all England. But your friend, Mr. Clifford, sir; I know something about him too. What I'd recommend him to do is to go straight to Scotland Yard and clear himself. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse—you understand me, sir; there's nothing against the lad Cli, because it was generally understood that he was this man's victim, but still better go and make it straight. Tell him to take post to-night and tell everything."

Claude Ainsley nodded. "I see," he said. "Poor fellow; do you know who he really is, my good man?"

"Yes," said the man, with a quiet smile. "Knew it weeks ago. Bless you, we've got the whole case clear from a pal of this man, this Melchior."

"What?" said Sir Ralph, who did not understand the slang word.

"A woman, Sir Ralph," said the detective. "A Kate Lucas, one of the gang. He got her out of the country to work this plant on Lady Melville, for you see this Lucas was sweet on him, and he knew she'd out up rough. But Heaven bless you, she had her suspicions when she'd got to Paris, and when he didn't come up to time she sent us the whole story, names and all. She split on him straight, though, and we've got his life as if it was written in a book."

Sir Ralph nodded in wonderment. "And she," he said, "have you got her?"

"No, nor likely too," said the detective. "Unless we get 'em together, for your mark, Sir Ralph, these women turn sharp on their pals sometimes, but they

always come round after a bit, and go to get their beating for it. She'll find him out, and take what he'll give her mild as milk; p'raps he'll kill her, he ain't particular. Ah, and that reminds me," he added, curtly, "that he's peppered a gentleman pretty liberally in getting clear. P'raps you know the gentleman. His name is Lord Harcourt."

"His name is Lord Harcourt!" repeated Claude Ainsley. "What? How can that be?"

"A rum start, sir, ain't it? He come up and headed the fellow, who, of course whips out his barker and shoots him. Ah, here's my nag. By this time he has got clean away, and I must put the speed on. You'll find the swell at the inn, gentlemen; all the beauty taken off him, and cussin' and swearin' like mad. The bullet scraped his forehead and marked his face for life. My respects to the young gentleman," and now, quite cool and business-like, he galloped off.

Sir Ralph and Claude Ainsley looked at each other in astonishment.

"I will go to the inn," said Claude. "Surely fate must have the ordering of things, for this is retribution indeed."

At the inn, lying on the sofa, his face covered with bandages, which his restless hands were fidgeting at, was the bold, the merciless duellist Lord Harcourt.

But where was all that courage for which the men of his set extolled and glorified him?

Can this pitiful creature, wailing and crying like a cur at the pain and everlasting disfigurement, be the cold-blooded duellist who shot his men to the tune of a jest?

Yes; broken in spirit, tortured by remorse, racked with weakness and a gnawing, insatiable unrest, he lay, a fit object for moralists to point at as a warning against the decoits of this world and the ways of transgressors.

"You here!" he wailed, tearing away the bandage and groaning at the pain. "What are you doing? Look at me—ruined, disfigured! Oh, the pain, Ainsley! That fiend has disfigured me for life. I'm ruined, ruined. Curse her! I came to bleed her for the last time, and—A thousand fiends are tearing at my face! Curse him!"

"Ruined?" said Claude Ainsley, striving to restrain his disgust and contempt.

"Yes, ruined," snarled Lord Harcourt. "Devonhill was seized yesterday; I am without a penny in the world, and disfigured. Curse him! Curse her! Curse you all! Get out of my sight!" And he fell on the sofa yelling and whining again.

Claude Ainsley, without a word—it would have

been impossible to feel pity for the creature—left him and returned to the Hall.

Before dawn the ruined roof, the immovable man of the world, had sneaked off without paying his bill, and reaching a seaport by post crossed to Paris, and there dragged out an intolerable existence in the slums of St. Antoine.

At the Hall matters were quieting down.

Sir Ralph, as he must still be called until the truth of Melchior's story could be ascertained, had placed the house at Clarence Clifford's disposal, but Clarence Clifford would have none of it.

To Claude Ainsley's earnest entreaty that he would follow the detective's advice and present himself in London he only replied:

"I have found my mother, the creature who gave me life, Mr. Ainsley, and I will not leave or resign her but to the grave. Oh, my mother! If fate had only been kinder to us two." And then he fell on his knees beside the bed again.

What could be done in such a case? But little; yet that little Claude, a true friend indeed in this time of need, did.

He himself went up to London, and placed Clarence's case in the hands of the proper authorities, who, having investigated it, freed the poor boy Cl from all responsibility in his villainous captor's acts, and, armed with the glad news, Claude returned to Rivershall.

CHAPTER LVII.

Feast with the best, and welcome to my house.

A hundred thousand welcomes!

SIX MONTHS AFTER.

It is summer now and the woods and hills of Rivershall are in all their glory. Such a summer, so soft, so pure, so prolific of fruit and flower, the oldest inhabitant fails to remember. There are brightness and gladness at Rivershall and a general joy and least satisfaction is palpable on every face.

At the Hall, which has been redecorated and enlarged by another wing, some great event is in prospect of the excitement these must be unnecessary.

The servants are hurrying to and fro, the butler snatching at the steward's button-hole and drawing him aside to mysterious conferences at the still-room door, the housekeeper scolding the servants and herself into inordinate perspiration, the footmen caressing their faultless whiskers with absorbed and trusty meditation, and, as a finishing stroke, old Jack Drutt is continually stamping into the Hall from the lodge and stamping to the lodge from the Hall, swearing heartily at every one who runs in his way and adding no reason for his perambulations.

In the great banquet-hall, vainly endeavoring to appear calm and composed, is Sir Ralph Melville, Sir Ralph still by courtesy, though in reality only plain "Squire;" he stands with a paper in his hands on which his eyes are more seldom cast than upon the drive that winds past the window.

He is looking remarkably well, none the worse for the trials that have fallen to him; rather red-checked indeed and with an appearance of suppressed satisfaction that betrays his stern mouth and frowning brow.

He is dressed, as of old, with scrupulous care; his deep white ruffles rising on his aristocratic breast like snowdrifts, at his wrists and down the ruffles are the diamonds that never appear save on important occasions, in his hand continually lies his old-fashioned gold watch.

"Hem," he mutters, "A quarter to twelve. I hope everything is ready; Mrs. Walker is not so young as she was, and—ah, my darling!"

He breaks off his anxious soliloquy to ejaculate this lovingly as a beautiful girl, the belle of the country and the pride of his heart, enters.

Having hinted at Sir Ralph's personal appearance, it would be invidious to let the lady's pass unnoticed, and truly she is worthy of a Byronic poem and a Titianic brush!

Sublime personification of the beautiful is a pure, young, fresh and innocent English girl.

What grace in the supple form as she runs to her father's arms—what divine light of love and expectancy in the deep light of the eloquent eyes—what rapturous hope and trust, faith and tenderness in the soft sigh and the flushed cheek!

Oh, a prize indeed is this true English rose with the pure heart of a lily!

"My darling," says Sir Ralph, changing from one foot to the other and clearing his throat with that peculiar cough of one labouring under excitement he is anxious to conceal, "my darling, don't get excited!"

"No, papa," she says, or rather whispers, glancing shyly at his trembling lips.

"No, no, don't, I beg of you! Er—I—dear me, that is twelve o'clock! What can have happened?"

"No, papa, that was the quarter chime."

"Indeed," says the squire, pulling out his watch again. "Hem, I must be a little fast—a little fast. Ahem. Do you know if everything is all right at the green?"

"Yes, papa, I think so," she says. "Old Jack was here a minute ago; he has been here every five minutes, papa."

And she laughs as if she loved Jack for it.

"And here he is again," says the squire, as Jack Drutt bursts into the room—without knocking—and says, in his hard, independent voice:

"Squire, they want some more flowers from the conservatory, and they says as how the red stuff beest snow, and the men says they wants some more ale, and Tim, the ostler, says as them grays can't do it for another hour yet."

Sir Ralph wiped his forehead with excitement.

"More flowers!" he says, eagerly. "Yes, go to Thompson and tell him he's to give them all they want, to strip the conservatory if need be. More damask? Go to Mrs. Thompson, she has plenty of it. At! Bless me, of course! said they were to have as much as they liked—ambrosia after the arch was up. And—and—the horses! Oh, nonsense, Tim knows nothing about it. There, there, I'll go myself, I'll go myself."

And away he bustles after old Jack, who has stamped off without waiting for the terminations. Lilian, left alone, goes to the window and looks out.

A pensive smile is on her lips, but they open with a sigh. It seems so long, so long!

The long nine months dwindle to nothing compared to these last few hours.

And is it true, what Tim the ostler says, that the grays cannot make the stage for another two hours? Ah, how long! and yet she dreads the moment of meeting sometimes, and then longs for it again with all the ardour of a pure young heart.

How beautiful the day is; the rosary is in full bloom; the air is laden with scents, and with something else; for every now and then rises the murmur and hoarse buzzing of voices, and the clink, clink, tap, of the busy hammers.

Away there on the green are fifty men hard at work stretching across the road a triumphal arch, all green and beautiful with shrubs and flowers and bearing this legend across its façade:

"Welcome to the Lord of Rivershall. Welcome, thrice welcome!"

On either pillar are stretched other scrolls, bearing still warmer testimony to the general joy at the master's return.

"Live in our hearts and pay no rent!"

"Home, sweet Home!"

On the green itself a crowd are building up a huge heap of wood and faggots.

A dozen barrels of pitch too, black and sticky, lie by its side, and to-night the flames of the bonfire will light the village from east to west, throw its lurid glare of rejoicing into the windows of the Hall itself and proclaim to the county and all that care to know the return of Sir Clarence Rivershall to his own.

All this the sweet girl knows, for she has not flitted across the green to the growing arch fifty times that morning, and has she not with her own white hands piled a log upon the heap?

And now Sir Ralph returns with a short, stout, and jovial-looking man by his side, who makes a profound bow to Miss Melville, and in rich tones, which were once welcome ones to a wanderer in London streets, says:

"Good morning, Miss Melville; all going on right? Jove, what a reception we'll give him."

Lilian smiles, as she always does, upon the queer, fat little personage.

"If you'll believe me!" he continues, turning to Sir Ralph, with something daintily like a wink,

"if you'll believe me, you'd think there were five hundred uncles and cousins waiting for him, to see the excitement there is! Heaven bless you, it's as much as I can do to keep 'em off the arch. They all wants to have a finger in it they say, and young 'uns one foot nothing high are dancing round your feet all the while and singing 'Live in our hearts and pay no rent!' That's took 'em, Miss Melville. That sentiment has given 'em particular satisfaction. I'm only sorry it ain't original, for I could take to sentimental motto writing to-morrow and make a good thing of it on the credit of it. He! he! I've turned my hand to a many things, Sir Ralph, during a life of what the poet calls flat attitudes, but I never enjoyed any of 'em so much as I do this."

"I am sure of that, Mr. Walker," answered Sir Ralph, smiling, and rubbing his hands, "and there will be no face he will be better pleased to see than yours, his friend in adversity."

"Oh," said Mr. Walker, with a long breath and shaking his head ruefully. "He would a been an ornament of commerce, Sir Ralph, meaning no offence. It was a sin to take him from it. Jove! he would a'

made my fortune and his own in two years, or my name is not Jeremiah Walker!"

Lilian smiled.

Praise of any kind bestowed on the man of her heart made her love the giver; and Jeremiah Walker, catching the smile, turned to her with a world of reverential respect and fondness.

"You must have some refreshment, Mr. Walker," she says, in her sweet voice. "It's so hot and you work so hard; let me ring for some wine."

"No, thank you, Miss Melville," says Mr. Walker, jumping up from the chair as if wound up and ready to go for eight days again. "Mrs. Walker, who ought to be my wife by the name, but unfortunately isn't, for I can't bring her round to negotiations, has got a cup of tea and a few muffins. I never knew a woman cook muffins as she does! and I think I'll take a refresher with them."

And with another bow Mr. Walker bustles out.

Twelve o'clock now and on the green the excitement grows intense.

All along the dusty road as far as one can see are stationed scouts and advanced outposts. At the slightest sign of the expected post-chaise the most advanced sentinel will start off at break-neck pace to announce the news.

But the crowds seem to put no trust in the scouts, for every neck is craned and every eye shaded as it stares along the road and then back to the arch again, that triumph of Mr. Walker and glory of his army of carpenters.

And now Mr. Walker is seen bustling along the road from the Hall, and he is instantly surrounded by the children, whom he loves too much to be able to frighten, though he attempts to do so by sundry growls and fearful threats of afflictions and other dreadful and mysterious tortures, but the youngsters only laugh the louder, and clinging round him ask when the "meosis is agoin' to play? and if 't aquire will be here directly?"

"Get out o' my way, you young imps," roars Mr. Walker. "Is that last bunch of roses in straight there? Where's Jim? Mike, clear the road there and send the hands another gallon out of that barrel. Is the young master acoming directly? Oh, yes, ma'am, he'll be here before you can say Jack Robinson. Darn you, Jim, where's the flag? Ah, all right. Stick the stars and stripes on that corner there. My eye! that's a splendid effect! Now for the Union Jack—this makes the fifth! you Britishers must be four to one against every other nation, darn your impudence. Well, put him right atop of the lot if you like, and now—Hello, what's that?"

Along the dusty road a speck, enveloped in dust itself, comes at a sharp pace.

A roar of excitement rises from the crowd; the band look vastly important, and wipe their mouths; Mr. Walker rushes to and fro and takes a last hasty glance at the arch; the women are pushed into the front that they may see; and the children are lifted up in the strong men's arms for a like reason; and the whole mass is buzzing and roaring and perspiring with heat and excitement.

And now, ready to drop, dashes in the first outpost.

"They're a coming, Mister Walker; I sodd 'em a roundin' Topham's Hill, and little Charley Green a whippin' into the off' gress!"

"All right! we're ready, my la, I think I!" shouts Mr. Walker, eyeing the arch proudly and rubbing his hands. "We're ready; and now, Mike, run on to the Hall and tell the squire."

But there is no occasion for that, Sir Ralph and Lilian can hear the roar of expectation at their outlook in the window, and Sir Ralph hurries into the hall, down whose sides are ranged the servants in two long lines, and from whose rafters hang the flags of the house and the armorial bearings on silken banners.

And now comes patting in another outpost.

"They are a coming! I sodd 'em at the 'pike!" And then, one after another, the nearer heralds dash in till the last has arrived, and the great cloud of dust rising from the road tells them that the long-announced post, with its steaming grays, is coming at last.

Oh, how English lungs can expand and shout when English hearts prompt them!

As the grays dash within reach of the roar of welcome the astounded position pulls them up and stares at the arch, the crowd, the excited faces, uncertain whether to proceed or not.

The sound of the opening door decides him and he leaps from his saddle as a handsome, bronzed-faced gentleman stands up in the carriage and, gazing round him with eyes that fill and like that tremble with emotion, says, in a clear, musical, and ringing voice, with all its emotion:

"Friends, if I do not thank you for this welcome it is because my heart is too full, and that the unexpected affection you have shown for one so unworthy of it has overwhelmed me. You ask me to live in

your hearts. While I live it shall be my chief object to enshrine myself there. You bid me welcome to the house of my forefathers. With my heart in my words I promise that it shall know no higher aim than the memory and protection of the faithful tenants round it. Friends, you are fellow masters of Rivershall with me to-day, and we will strive with honest hands and loving hearts to conduct our stewardship so that when account is required of us by that Master of all we may render up our charge with humble trust and satisfaction. Thank you, one and all, for your kind welcome; but if you would add yet another joy to those with which you have filled my heart let me hear you bless that other master, Sir Ralph Melville!"

The cheers which had interrupted these broken acknowledgments of the unexpected reception culminated at the close into one long roar, in which Sir Ralph's name mingled with "Sir Clarence," and then, as if unable to contain their enthusiasm, the sons of the soil bore forward in one tumultuous rush.

Some pressed to the carriage and beat against the door, calling him "the squire," the handsome young master, "Old Sir William's Boy," blessings on him from all.

Others dashed at the grays, and with hot, trembling fingers unfastened the harness and took the horses out; then, as Clarence, catching sight of the welcome face of Jeremiah Walker, tried to attract his attention, and at last grasped his hand, the mob harassed themselves to the carriage and dashed off, shouting and hurrahing, for the hall.

With a heightened colour and an eager light in his eyes, the young master of Rivershall leapt from the carriage, gently pushed his way through the crowd of followers, and sprang up the steps to where Sir Ralph stood with outstretched hands.

"Heaven bless you, my boy!" he said, in a tremulous voice, and with moist eyes. "You are back safe and sound! But where is Claude?"

"The dear old fellow must needs stop behind at Rome to see some carnival or grand procession, but he is following after, and will be here in time for the dinner. Yes, back again, and to find a welcome warmer than I deserve. Oh, sir, the last nine months have not been wasted, impatiently though I have lived through them, for I have not only regained my health but learned how dearly I love my darling. Let us go to her, sir."

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! Long live the young squire!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the crowd, throwing up their hats and waving their hands.

Sir Ralph, drawing Clarence's arm through his, raised his voice and smiled down upon him.

"There's roast beef and ale for every one of you in the large tent on the lawn. Be merry, my mon, and drink Sir Clarence's health."

"That we will," they shouted, "and yours too, Sir Ralph, and the dear lass's."

And to that tune the two, still arm-in-arm, entered the banquet room.

The father felt the strong arm tighten on his own, the breath come quickly, then slidly withdrew his arm, pushed Clarence gently forward, and stepped back, closing the door behind him.

Clarence sprang forward, caught the blushing, beautiful girl to his heart, and speechless for a moment poured a hot storm of kisses on her head.

"Look up, my darling," he said, "and make my joy complete. Oh, Lillian, my love, my love! This happiness is almost too great for one man."

She looked up at that with a smile through her tears of joy and pointing with one hand to the window said, brokenly, as the cheers of the crowd rose again:

"Not for one; others can share it with you—even I."

He kissed her again at that arch reply, and then—Well, let us leave them; lovers' confidences and conferences are sacred.

They lit the bonfire that night and the flames rose to do battle with the moon. And in both lights, the garish flames and the peaceful rays, the happy people danced on the green and made merry.

Four huge barrels of home-brewed stood in the tent, and four strong men were in attendance to empty them.

A long table was set up near at hand, upon which with magical regularity and profuseness appeared huge joints of cold beef, pasties and puddings.

"Never were such times as these!" declared a white-haired old man who had laboured on the Rivershall soil since his poll had been covered with flaxen, never were such times, let agitators and unionists say what they might, and the listeners joyously assented.

Mr. Walker was great on the occasion and surpassed himself by getting most gloriously intoxicated and very nearly blowing himself skyhigh with a grand and magnificently assorted display of fireworks.

All night the fun went on, and when the sun rose

there was still a small crowd upon the place, looking at its reflection in the Hall windows and talking enthusiastically of the new master.

So much for the humbler friends, but now came the more important ones, and for these one of the old Rivershall dinners was announced.

No modern cramped-up dining-room was the grand banquet-hall of Rivershall, and Sir Clarence when he issued his invitations had no need to count seats and feel anxious as to standing room.

All the county families were asked, including Lady Bessant, who, however, with her son had left for the Continent and their return was indefinite.

It was a grand dinner, quite what the old Melville dinners used to be, said those who were qualified to express an opinion upon the subject.

"The finest, grandest, most tremendous spread you fellows ever heard of," said Mr. Dalton when he got back to town, and the smoking-room of his club.

"And to see Clarence Clifford stand up and reply to Sparkleton's toast was worth a cool thou. He can speak, mind you, and it was wonderful to hear him. I declare the old boy, Sir Ralph—that was you know—actually pined his eye. I saw him though he blew his nose till the glasses rang again. And Claude Ainsley was there, dark as a nigger, and as thick as thieves with Sir Clarence and Miss Melville—they treat him like a brother!"

It was indeed all that Mr. Dalton said, and Sir Clarence made a grand speech, but he made a better one afterwards, for as he stood, when the guests had gone, in the great drawing-room, with Sir Ralph on the mat beside him, and Lillian at his elbow, he drew her to him, and looking into her downcast eyes, said, with a smile:

"Sir Ralph, they are ringing the bells. What for I cannot say, but I should like to give them an excuse for doing it soon!"

And then, as Sir Ralph, laughing, left the room, he drew his beautiful bride-to-be closer yet and whispered:

"How soon, my love, how soon? I have got Rivershall, but it is a hollow casket without the pearl."

(To be continued.)

ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.—An important improvement in St. Paul's Churchyard was formally dedicated the other day, by the Dean and Chapter and the Lord Mayor, to the use of the public. The space thrown open comprises an area of 7,000 square feet. This space has been purchased from the Dean and Chapter by the Corporation of the City of London for the sum of 16,000*l*. Of this sum, however, the Dean and Chapter had expended about 6,000*l*. in the work of carrying out the improvements. The roadway has been enlarged by above 7,000 feet, and a space, semi-elliptical in form, has also been flagged in front of the cathedral, enclosing upwards of 13,000 feet. This ground will remain the property of the Dean and Chapter, but foot-passengers will have access to it. Upon the occasions of important services in the cathedral this will be temporarily enclosed by barriers fixed to the granite posts which mark the boundary.

DOMESTIC WORRIES.—There is no end to the worries one may have if one chooses. Some days everything goes wrong; little chickens die without any apparent cause; the inkstand is overturned on the best carpet; stray goats get in the garden through a loose picket and eat everything; the butter won't come; the cistern goes dry and no rain falls; wicked nocturnal cats ruin the flower-beds; the baby carries off and loses the silver spoons, and there's no end to trouble. Blessed is that woman who can face all these little ills with a smile, and turn them into the nutriment of patience. It will not make much difference when our little ones are grown if they did smash china, soil their Sunday clothes, and make finger marks on the doors and windows, but their lives here and hereafter will doubtless be influenced by the spirit with which their various juvenile escapades and delinquencies are met. The mother who can preserve an unwrinkled forehead, a cheery tone, a kindly glance amid the innumerable causes of worry that arise in every family will be the one of all others whose "children will rise up and call her blessed."

SHEEP DOGS OF CALIFORNIA.—The Californian shepherds have a most ingenious system for teaching their dogs to guard the countless flocks of sheep of Southern California. One may wander for miles, and see thousands of sheep, but not a man to watch them, but around each flock are half a dozen dogs. These have the entire care of the sheep, drive them out to the pasture in the morning, keep them from straying during the day, and bring them home at night. These animals have inherited a talent for keeping sheep, and this talent is cultivated in this way. When a lamb is born, if the shepherds have a pup which they want to train, the lamb is taken from its mother, she

not being allowed to see her offspring, and the puppy is put in its place, and the sheep suckles it. When the puppy grows old enough to eat meat it is fed in the morning, and sent out with the sheep. It stays with them because it is accustomed to be with its foster-mother, but it cannot feed with them, and as they get full the dog gets hungry. At length, impatient to return, when it hopes to get its meat, the dog begins to tease and worry the mother, and finally starts her towards home, the others follow, and thus the whole flock is brought in. If they are brought home too early, or the dog comes without them, he gets punished in some way, and thus by taking advantage of their instincts and appetite these dogs are trained to a great state of perfection, and become invaluable to the owners of large flocks.

A LIFE-SKETCH.

JOHN OGDEN had contracted a very bad habit—a dangerous and a sinful habit. Had any one suggested to him a game of cards to be played for money, he would not have listened; and yet he was growing to be a gambler notwithstanding. His sin was that of betting, and it had so grown upon him that he would bet upon the result of things most trivial or most grave. He was a young man, not more than eight-and-twenty, with a wife and two children—a wife true and loving, and children bright and good. And John was a good, kind husband, and an even-tempered, indulgent father. He was book-keeper in a mercantile house, upon a salary more than sufficient for all his proper wants.

John Ogden's betting had come to be a matter of emphasis and determination. The habit had so fastened itself upon him that he could bet off-hand, and pay a loss, or take a winning, as a matter of course.

"Susan," he said, one evening, with radiant face, "I have won ten pounds to-day."

"How?" asked the wife, with a shadow upon her face.

"I bet ten pounds on the result of the elections, and I have won."

"Whom did you bet with, John?"

"With Charles Ashcroft."

"And you took his ten pounds?"

"Certainly—why shouldn't I? He fairly lost."

"And you, I suppose, fairly won?"

"Of course I did."

"And do you think Charles Ashcroft was able to bear the loss?"

"That isn't my look-out."

"I am sorry, John. I wish you would put away that habit. Only evil can come of it."

"Pshaw!"

"Evil has already come, John. Your heart is growing hard. Time was when you could not have taken ten pounds from a poor and needy family without a feeling of shame and compunction."

"Susan! I don't want a lecture. I know what I am up to. You don't know so much of the world as I do."

And with this John Ogden took his hat and went out—went out like a coward, knowing that if he entered into argument with his wife she would twist him into a labyrinth from which he could only escape by an angry bolt.

Half an hour later Peter Cartwright came in. He was a year or two older than John, and was Susan's cousin—only a cousin by blood, but as they had been brought up from early childhood together they were like brother and sister in life and love. Peter sat down, and chatted awhile, and found his cousin not so cheerful as usual.

"You are not well, Susan?"

"I am well in body, Peter, but sours at heart."

"What is it?"

"I fear not to speak with you freely. I am worrying about John. His habit of betting is taking deeper and deeper root. To-day he has won ten pounds from Charles Ashcroft on the result of the elections. Last week he won five pounds on something else. I know his temperament. He is headstrong and impulsive. Can you not see the danger?"

"Yes, Susan, I have seen it this long time, but have not dared to speak of it. If John were cold-blooded and calculating he might occasionally bet with danger only of doing wrong to those from whom he won money, but as it is, with his impulsive, mercurial temperament, there is other danger."

"I wish you could influence him, Peter."

"I wish I could; but I fear he would not listen."

Cartwright took out his watch, and said he must be going. He had left a friend waiting, and must go back to him.

"I came," he added, "to get John to call up with me. You remember Frank Powers?"

"Certainly," said Susan, with a brightening eye.

"Well," returned Peter, "he is through an accident minus an arm."

"I am very sorry to hear it, and I should like to see him."

"He shall call. He will be glad, I know."

Peter had arisen, and got as far as the door, when he stopped and turned.

"Susan," he said, "I have an idea. Isn't John saving up money with which to pay off the mortgage on his house?"

"Yes. He has paid off a great deal and has almost enough to settle the remainder."

"Don't say anything to him about my call here today and say nothing about Mr. Powers."

"But—Peter—"

"Trust me, Susan. I think I see a way to give him a lesson. Hold your peace, and await the result."

On the following day Peter Cartwright met John Ogden, and informed him of the arrival of Mr. Powers.

"And he wants to see you, old fellow. Will you go up with me this evening?"

"Certainly I will," replied John, gladly. "How is he?"

"Comfortable, considering. He has had a hard time of it, though. You know he had lost an arm?"

"I heard of his accident. And so the arm had to come off?"

"Yes."

"Which—"

"Excuse me, John. I have an appointment to keep at the bank. I will call for you this evening."

"All right. I'll be ready."

And in the evening Peter called, and together the two went to the hotel. They found Mr. Powers in his private room, seated in a big easy-chair, and looking somewhat pale and worn.

"Frank, my dear fellow, how are you?" cried John, advancing.

"John, old boy, I am glad to see you. You'll excuse my not rising. I am pretty well, but not so strong as I have been."

"Keep your seat, Frank. I am glad to see you; and I'm sure you'll pick up in time."

The empty coat-sleeve, dangling over the arm of the chair, was eloquent, and John's eyes moistened as he fixed his gaze upon it.

"And yet the conversation flowed pleasantly after a time."

John arose to depart first. He had told his wife that he should not be out late. Cartwright would remain a while longer.

On the day following this visit Peter and John met in the street close by the bank where the latter had come to deposit for his employers. Peter had evidently been waiting and watching.

"Are you going to lunch, John?"

"Yes. Will you come with me?"

"I will if you'll lunch with me."

"Any way."

The restaurant was near at hand, and while they ate they talked of Frank Powers and his adventures, and also of his mishap.

"He ought to be thankful, though," remarked Peter, "that it was his left arm that was hurt instead of his right."

John Ogden looked up curiously.

"Eb, Peter?"

"I say Frank ought to be thankful that his left arm was hurt instead of his right."

"You mean that for a joke?"

"How?"

"Why, Frank has lost his right arm, to be sure."

"You are mistaken, John. His right arm is safe and sound. It is the left that is gone."

"Peter, are you in earnest? Do you mean it?"

"Are you daft, John?" Of course I mean it."

"Do you mean to say that Frank Powers has lost his left arm, and that his right arm is intact?"

"I do say exactly so."

John pressed the ends of his fingers upon his brow, and called up to mind the picture as he had seen it on the previous evening. He remembered just where the empty sleeve had dangled, and he remembered that the opposite arm had been whole.

"Peter," he finally said, slowly and emphatically, "Frank Powers has lost his right arm!"

"You are mistaken, John."

"Do you think so?"

"I know you are mistaken."

"I'd like to bet you something on it," said John, with a decisive gesture.

"I'll bet you anything you like, my dear fellow, so that you make it an object."

"And I'll bet anything you like," John answered.

"You ain't sure enough to bet a hundred pounds?"

"A hundred?"

"I thought it would shake your confidence in yourself," nodded Peter, with a smile.

John Ogden started to his feet, and brought his hand down with a slap upon the table.

"Dare you bet a hundred pounds, Peter?"

"Yes."

"You'll lose it."

"I am able to lose."

"Well, the bet is made then. Will you stay here while I go and get the money?"

"Yes."

John hurried away to the bank and drew out a hundred pounds, and with it returned to the lunch-room flushed and excited. A friend of both gentlemen was called, to whom the case was stated.

"I bet a hundred pounds," said John, "that Frank Powers has lost his right arm, and that his left arm is whole."

"And I," said Peter, "bet the same amount that Frank Powers has lost his left arm, and that his right arm is whole."

The money was deposited in the hands of the friend with instructions that he should pay it to the winner. And then they agreed that the three should go at once to the hotel and there settle the matter.

Twelve months before this time John Ogden would not have bet so large a sum under any circumstances; but the habit had indeed grown upon him.

Arrived at the hotel the three were admitted to Mr. Powers's presence.

"Ah, boys, I am glad to see you. I am feeling much better to-day. John, old fellow, I can get up for you now. How are you?"

And Mr. Frank Powers arose and extended his hand—his right hand!—and when John felt its grasp he found it true flesh and blood, warm and pulsating! He staggered back with a groan.

"You will excuse us," said Peter; "but John and I had a little dispute. He thought you had lost your right arm."

"Oh, no," returned Powers, smiling. "Thank Heaven, my right arm is spared me," extending his good right hand; "but this poor stump is all that is left of its fellow," pointing to the empty sleeve that hung by his left side.

John got away as soon as he could. The money was paid over to Peter Cartwright.

"I am sorry you lost your money, John," the latter said, as he put the bank-notes into his pocket-book, "but I think I won it fairly."

"It's all right, Peter." And John tried to smile as he said so, but he could not do it.

A miserable man was John Ogden that afternoon; and more miserable was he when he went to his home in the evening. His wife asked him what was the matter, but he would not tell her; and when she pressed him he was angry. He could not—he dared not—tell her that the money that was to have paid for their precious home had been swept away in a moment—swept away by an act of his own sin and folly.

That night he slept not a wink. On the following morning, pale and shaking, he started to go away from his home without his breakfast. On his doorstep he was met by Cartwright's clerk, who handed him a sealed packet.

"It is from Mr. Cartwright, sir."

"Do you wait for an answer?"

"No, sir."

John went back into his house, and broke the seal, and opened the packet. He found within one hundred pounds in crisp bank notes, and a folded letter. He opened the letter and read:

"DEAR JOHN—With this I send you back your hundred pounds. I won the money as honestly as gambling bets are often won, and yet I did not win it fairly. Frank and I deceived you on purpose. On your first visit his right arm was hidden beneath his coat, and his wooden left arm was strapped on. As he did not rise from his chair the deception was perfect. You found him on your second visit as he really was, only the wooden arm had been laid aside."

"Forgive me, John, and believe that I had an aim in this which Heaven grant may be fulfilled."

"PETER."

"P.S.—I should like that this subject should never be referred to between us. Please me in this, won't you?"

"Dear John, what is that?"

Susan had come in, and as she spoke she put her arm around her husband's neck and kissed him. He returned the kiss.

"Not now, Susan," he said, huskily. "I will tell you some time."

"But you will come and eat some breakfast?"

"If you won't ask me any more questions—yes."

The blow had been a severe one, and the effects of the shock did not quickly pass away. But John Ogden revived in time; and when he told to his wife the secret of his trouble on that unhappy night he was prepared to give her a great and lasting joy by adding that he had made his last bet.

S. C. J.

A HAPPY WOMAN.—What spectacle more pleasing does the earth afford than a happy woman, con-

tented in her sphere, ready at all times to benefit her little world by her exertions, and transforming the briars and thorns of life into roses of Paradise by the magic of her touch? There are those who are thus happy because they cannot help it—no misfortunes dampen their sweet smiles, and they diffuse a cheerful glow around them as they pursue the even tenor of their way. They have the secret of contentment, whose value is above the philosopher's stone; for without seeking the baser exchange of gold, which may buy some sorts of pleasure, they convert everything they touch into joy. What their condition is makes no difference. They may be rich or poor, high or low, admired or forsaken by the fickle world; but the sparkling fountain of happiness bubbles up in their hearts, and makes them radiantly beautiful. Though they live in a log cabin, they make it shine with a lustre that kings and queens may covet, and they make wealth a fountain of blessings to the children of poverty.

MARION EARL.

THE school term was over, and teachers and pupils were alike excited by the prospect of a respite from labour and the delights of vacation.

It was Florence Neville's last year. She was going home now to enter society, and take the position in life which was opened to her by her own charms and the wealth and influence of her family.

Florence was beautiful, and, what was better, she had acute perceptions, a bright imagination, a tender heart, and profound sense of her moral responsibility. With all these gifts she could hardly fail of being a creature somewhat apart from her schoolmates. She was a favourite among them, and yet there was always a sense of distance between her and the best-beloved of her schoolgirl friends. Even her teachers held her a little in awe.

There was, however, one exception. Marion Earl was an under-teacher of mathematics. She was a quaint, quiet little body, as void, to outward appearance, of striking characteristics as a woman could well be. But there were curious convolutions in her nature, and somewhere among them was hidden a subtle, impalpable essence which had the power to hold Florence Neville in thrall. There is a love "passing the love of women;" a strong vital attraction which women may feel for women, or men for one of their own sex, which can so attract and fuse two souls that neither shall be wholly itself without the other. It was this tie which bound the beautiful and elegant Florence to her humbler friend.

They were having their last hour's conversation together in Miss Earl's room. Marion was seated with Florence kneeling by her side, her flowing draperies spread out around her, and her head with its golden coronet of braids laid tenderly upon the bosom of her friend.

"Marion," she said, "this parting is harder even than I thought it would be. It is like letting my own soul go out of my keeping to part from you. I wonder if you care for me at all as I care for you."

For one instant there was silence, and a deep light burned in Marion Earl's eyes.

"I cannot swear that," she said at length. "I do not know how they who are rich and beautiful and coveted care for their friends. I only know how one who was shipwrecked and lost, cast up at length upon some desert strand, might worship an angel from the skies who should leave his native bowers to sojourn with and comfort the desolate one."

Florence looked into her friend's face with amazement.

"Why," she said, "is this my quiet Marion who speaks? I never knew you to be impassioned before."

Marion's face had grown pale and quiet again.

"Forgive me," she said, "but your question touched me nearly. It awoke an old doubt which has sometimes tormented me—a doubt whether, if you knew all, you would still love and trust me as you do."

"It is strange," said Florence, slowly, "that I have never thought before that you must have a past. Your present self has so engrossed me that I have never thought to question you concerning aught in your early life. You are an orphan, are you not? and I think you have said that you had not many relatives."

Marion bowed her head upon her hands.

"You are sure," she said, "that I may trust you with the story—trust your love, I mean? I do not doubt your honour."

Florence looked up and smiled proudly.

"He either fears his fate too much
Or his desert is small,
Who dare not put it to the touch,
And win or lose it all,"

was her answer, and doubtful as might have been

the import of it to some ears, her friend understood her.

"Florence," she said, gazing coolly and stradally into her face, "that answer was like you. You are the only brave woman whom I ever met. Pah! the cowardice of my sex disgusts me. You shall have my story, and I tell you truly that never before has it passed my lips."

The two friends sat together in the golden mid-summer twilight till the long and impassioned tale was told. Gradually, as the speaker drew to a close, Florence had raised her head; her eyes glistened, her cheek burned, she withdrew herself from the circling arms of her friend and sat upright; but Marion knew in her inmost soul that the movement was not one of aversion. She ceased speaking at length and Florence bowed her head in silence, her hands clasped tightly the while in those of her friend.

"Heaven forgive me," she said, slowly, at length, "that I have lived side by side with you these past three years, and never known or loved you as I ought. And yet I am sorry that I asked you the question that I did."

"Are you sorry that I told you what I did?" queried Marion, almost impatiently.

"Oh," said Florence, bursting into tears and burying her face upon the bosom of her friend, "it has aged me so. I was a girl when the sun went down. He will rise on my girlhood no more. From this moment I am a woman, and, oh, dear Marion, how sad and heart-sore a woman I can never, never tell."

Marion was silent, her face still pale, her eyes still burning with their deep and lambent fires.

"And you regret it?" she said, at length, with labouring breath, as if speech were no easy task.

"No," she said; "at twenty one must no more seek to be a child. But, Marion, one thing is settled—I cannot leave you here. You are too isolated, too unprotected."

"No," said Marion. "Heaven will take care of me."

"I tell you that while your fate is thus in suspense I will never leave you nor forsake you. If you will not come with me, then here I stay with you."

"Why, that would be absurd," said Marion.

"Not very," replied Florence. "I have often thought of late what my life might be at home: tame, wearisome, monotonous. I know it by heart already. Mademoiselle Perrine leaves this term, and her place is not yet filled. Madam Du Barry will give it to me. My French is good, my music unexceptionable. We are so near town that I could go home frequently. I think I shall stay."

It was Florence's way of managing her friend.

"You know," said Marion, at length, "that I could not be dependent."

"Well, you need not. Grace and Kitty must have a governess. It may as well be you as another. Then I should have your society, your counsel, your affection, and I should know that you were safe."

Marion hesitated. There would not be the freedom in such a life, she felt, that she now enjoyed, but there would be Florence.

"Well," said Miss Neville, who was impatient at her friend's hesitancy, "you shall do as you like, and I will see Madam Du Barry this evening. I would quite as soon stay here."

"But, Florence dear, you know that is impossible. Your parents would never consent."

"I beg your pardon," replied Florence. "I know nothing of the sort. Papa has ideas about the independence of girls as well as of boys. You know he has put all his sons to business."

Florence was in a mood not to be resisted, and her friend saw it.

"I fear it is wrong," she said, "but it would be so much to me to be always with you."

"A woman who listens is ready to yield," and in five minutes it was settled.

Florence ran in all haste to acquaint Madam Du Barry with her friend's decision and the cause of it.

"You see," she said, "we cannot be separated. Neither she nor I realized the impossibility of it till this evening. So, now, instead of spending a stupid vacation with the scholars who stay over till next term, she is to pack her trunk forthwith, and be off with me, and you are to find her substitute as soon as may be."

Madam Du Barry demurred a little at the short notice, but there was plainly nothing to be done about it, and she wisely yielded at last with a good grace.

The Nevilles were a family of great respectability and moderate fortune. They entertained in good style, though not lavishly. Florence was the eldest daughter, and her entrance into society was anticipated with great eagerness by her parents.

Marion, who was older and more experienced than her friend, knew very well that in the intervals of gay life Florence would find far less time than she at present imagined to spend with her humble friend, yet still they would be in the same house, and what

ever happened to the one could but be known to the other, and that was a great deal to both of them.

There was no objection made to Florence's plan in the family circle, and Miss Earl was soon ensconced in the schoolroom, and presiding in her quaint, firm way over the destinies of the two little girls. Florence made a flying trip with her parents to Scotland but returned in September. The season opened early, and one of the first events of importance was Florence's coming-out party.

On the evening in question Florence stood in her dressing-room, the centre of an admiring circle. Mrs. Neville was directing the maid, who was giving the last touches to the elegant coiffure, and Miss Earl, whose taste and touch were far superior to the maid's, was arranging drapery and flowers.

"I am elegant, mamma," said Florence, with her usual frankness; "there is no doubting that; but do I please you?"

"To the finest degree, my daughter," was the reply.

"There is nothing which I would alter."

"Then I am sure to be self-possessed all the evening," said Florence; "for when mamma is pleased I know that the critics are silenced. Dear Marion, I wish you were coming down with us."

"Will you not at least come down at supper-time?" said Mrs. Neville.

"You do not dance, I know, but in the dining-room no one is noticed, and during the remainder of the evening I should be glad to introduce you to one or two old friends, whom I am sure you would enjoy knowing."

"Do, do come down," said Florence; "there's a dear. You know mamma's tact, and I am sure you would enjoy it."

But Marion was not to be entreated. As Florence gathered up her bouquet and handkerchief she kissed her quietly, and said:

"I prophesy for you, dear Florence, a most brilliant success. I should be most glad to witness it, but such a scene would bring up too many old memories."

So Marion retired to her own room, and was soon asleep, while Florence, surrounded by a host of enthusiastic friends, was taking her first taste of adulation and flattery.

It was long past midnight when the door of Marion's room flew open, and a tall figure in trailing, diaphanous robes, eyes brilliant and cheeks burning like a flame, appeared at her bedside.

"Florence, dear," said Marion, "is it you? You are so much like an angel that you startled me."

"Yes, it is I. I could not sleep till I had told you of my success. It has been a most happy evening. Not one thing went wrong, and, oh!—well, the rest will keep till morning."

Marion, waking from a sound sleep, was not certain whether that seemed strange and unusual in her friend's manner was to be attributed to some unexpected excitement or to her own want of accord with the last hour of the ball. Florence lingered a moment but said nothing which elucidated the mystery, and finally, kissing her friend good night, swept out again with a rush and a rustle to her own apartment.

Marion lay awake for an hour, striving to forecast for her own pleasure the future which lay before Florence. She is too beautiful, too lovely, and too gifted not to make many friends, was her thought. She will marry soon, I have no doubt, and then what will become of her humble Marion? Was it wise, after all, to leave my place in school for the sake of her whim? But then she thought how Florence's heart had been set upon the measure and cherished no more doubts.

Long before Florence had calmed the tumult of her brain Marion was quietly dreaming, and yet an event had happened that evening which was of deeper moment to both of them than the one lying awake on account of it and listening to the strange whispers of fancy, or the other, sleeping the dreamless sleep of virtue and contentment, could possibly imagine.

The evening had been well advanced and most of the guests had already paid their respects to the fair young debutante when Percy Gladwin appeared upon the scene. He was a stranger there, and attended the party as the friend of certain old schoolmates and intimates of Florence.

Mr. Gladwin was a man perhaps thirty-five years of age, tall, dark, and handsome. There was something in his brilliant eyes and his man-of-the-world air which impressed Florence deeply, and after the introduction and the moment's chat which followed it she found occasion to say to Ellen Vernon:

"Who is this handsome cavalier of yours, and whence comes he?"

Ellen replied, with a rather patronizing air:

"Mr. Gladwin is a friend of my uncle. He is of a very aristocratic family, and is himself of distinguished abilities."

Miss Vernon's manner was such as to make it impossible for Florence to continue her inquiries, and,

amid the rush of introductions, the event passed from her mind. Later in the evening, however, she had betaken herself to a quiet corner, for the express purpose of regaining her breath and calming her pulses a little, when suddenly Mr. Gladwin appeared at her side.

"You are fatigued, Miss Neville," he said. "Permit me to conduct you to a quieter place than this, and then procure you some refreshment."

He offered her his arm, which she gratefully accepted, and led her to a corner of the conservatory. Disappearing for an instant, he returned with an ice. It was a commonplace attention, but the air with which it was rendered was not at all commonplace.

Florence was no silly schoolgirl. Under the judicious guidance of her mamma she had been given a much more extensive knowledge of the world than most schoolgirls possess. She was quite well enough acquainted with the conventional type of the society man to know that Mr. Gladwin, in power and elegance and the possession of himself, was so far beyond it as to seem almost another order of being. Even this did not express the whole difference between him and the gentlemen to whom she was used. His presence thrilled and almost awed her. He seemed always looking at her across some great gulf of deep and possibly strange experience.

"I would give a fortune," was her constant thought, "just to know that man's history."

She feared him, and yet she was fascinated by him. Their conversation was only of commonplace, but it seemed inclined to prolong itself indefinitely.

At length Mrs. Neville missed her daughter, and made search. She was a little startled to find her tête-à-tête with this dark stranger, but his coolness reassured her.

"The gaieties of the evening were overpowering Miss Neville," he said. "She was literally fainting under her conquests, and I took the liberty of shielding her from the too great stress of her attractions."

Mrs. Neville expressed her gratitude politely, and though, to tell the truth, she was not over well pleased, she could do no other than to accept Mr. Gladwin's escort to the drawing-room.

After that instant Florence missed him from the rooms. Indeed she saw no more of him that evening, but the glamour of his wonderful eyes was upon her, and, complaining of fatigue, she kept as much in shadow as possible until the guests began to retire.

The next day Mr. Gladwin called. Mrs. Neville was engaged with other guests, and, as he remained but a moment, she had no thought of danger to Florence. But even that brief call had afforded the practised man of the world an opportunity of deepening the impression of the evening previous.

When Florence went upstairs to dress for dinner she called Marion to her, as was her usual custom, and recounted the incidents of the day. It seemed strange to her, and yet the impulse was irresistible, and she carefully concealed from Marion all knowledge of Mr. Gladwin. If her conscience upbraided her, she stilled it by saying, "It is nothing—an introduction, the offer of an ice, a five minutes' call, that is all."

And yet in her heart of heart she knew it was not all.

The weeks passed on, and, although Florence frequently met her new acquaintance, and always there was a deepening of her first impressions of attraction and mystery, she still hesitated to confide to her friend the story of her interest in Mr. Gladwin.

At length, one day, going into Florence's dressing-room, Marion noticed upon the bureau a glass in which was a cluster of the purple blossoms of the asphodel.

She started and grew very pale; but happily Florence, who was busy with a refractory knot of ribbon, did not notice her change of colour.

"Why," she said, "where did you get such flowers as these?"

Florence looked up then, and turned crimson.

"Oh! those?" she said, hastily. "I did not mean that you should see them."

Marion was astonished at her manner, for hitherto she had not imagined that Florence had any disposition to make secrets with her. Her face expressed both surprise and sorrow, and Florence hastened to say:

"Oh! it is nothing very wonderful. They were given me last evening by a gentleman—a gentleman of whom I think you have never heard me speak."

In an instant Marion was enlightened.

"I wish," she said, "that you would tell me more about this gentleman."

"Dear Marion," said Florence, "it is nothing. I met Mr. Gladwin at my coming-out party. He is very handsome, very distinguished, and impresses me

somehow differently from any other gentleman I have ever met."

"And he gave you asphodel," said Marion, with an effort to be calm. "What did he say when he gave it to you?"

"It is strange that you should ask that question."

"But I wish it to be answered."

Marion spoke with the authority of love, and her friend felt it. And yet she hesitated before repeating the words.

"What he said to me was like a line out of a tragedy," she said. "It was this: 'The men of our house give only asphodel to the women whom they esteem, for they who can drink of our cup must not fear to taste a bitter draught.'"

"Florence," said Marion, almost sternly, "do you love that man?"

Miss Neville was very pale. She was neither a coward nor a weakling, but there was an influence upon her which more and more, she felt, was that of a spirit stronger than hers. She looked into Marion's face with dumb entreaty in her eyes.

"Heaven help me, Marion," she said, "I do not know."

Marion sat by her side, and quietly begged her to be more frank.

"Tell me all about it," she said. "I am older than you, and more experienced. Possibly I shall be able to help you."

"Why, thus it stands," said Florence, half-mockingly, and yet with deepest seriousness at heart. "The gentleman seems in every way an eligible party, and I fancy he stands upon the verge of an offer. I may be mistaken, but so it seems to me."

"And if he should offer, your heart inclines you to accept him?"

"He impresses me as no one else ever did. When he enters a room I know it, though I am not looking in that direction. If he asks me to dance with him I have no alternative but to obey. Whatever he desires I grant him without hesitation; and yet I sometimes feel that the power he has over me is not the result of a true attraction."

"If all that you say is true, if he were to ask you to be his wife, and there was no higher authority to whom you must appeal—I mean, for instance, if you were an orphan without ties, you would not hesitate to marry him?"

"Oh, I see what you mean," said Florence. "Why did I not think of it before?"

She shuddered as she spoke, and buried her face in her hands.

At this instant Mrs. Neville entered the room.

"Why, Florence, dear," she exclaimed, "why so sad? Mr. Gladwin is below waiting for you to drive with him. Dress yourself quickly, my love."

Marion stepped out into the hall, determined to obtain a view of the gentleman's face. At that instant the parlour bell rang, and, obeying a sudden impulse, she slipped down the back stairs, and presented herself in answer to the summons.

The room was dark, and Mr. Gladwin, pacing restlessly up and down in the shadows, scarcely observed at all the face of the seeming servant, who stood humbly before him to know his wants.

"A glass of water, if you please," he said, civilly enough.

Marion slipped out, and, meeting a servant in the hall, transferred the order to him. She had seen all that she cared to see; indeed the vision made her quake and tremble. Waiting but a moment to calm the hurried beating of her heart, she slipped up the back staircase, determined to prevent Florence from taking this dangerous drive. But, to her mortification, she found that she was already too late. Florence had gone down the front way, and was already in the carriage. To interfere now seemed impossible, and would, she felt certain, cost her her own life, while it might not save her friend. There was too much at stake, she thought, to risk hasty measures. In order to compass the ruin which her foe so richly merited it would be necessary to know exactly upon what ground he stood.

She went immediately to Mrs. Neville, and inquired concerning Mr. Gladwin's claims and pretensions. Mrs. Neville was in her most complacent mood. She did not mind telling Marion, who said, who was so dear a friend to her dear child, that Florence was apparently on the eve of making a most brilliant match. Mr. Gladwin was a gentleman of unlimited means, of fine family, and most distinguished gifts.

"Pardon me," said Marion, "if I presume. I can only plead my deep interest in dear Florence. Unless Mr. Gladwin should prove to be a man of tenderer mould than some I have met with I fear very much for Florence's happiness."

Mrs. Neville replied, a little haughtily:

"Florence will certainly not be required to marry any man against her will, and the husband whom her heart elects, and whom her parents approve,

must, I should suppose, all things considered, be the person in whose hands her happiness will be safest."

It was useless to strive to influence Mrs. Neville against him, and yet Marion had no serious fears for Florence. Surely, when she should tell her that it was to this man that she owed all the unhappiness of her life, even though she could bring no evidence of her story, Florence would believe her and would abhor him. Yet, after all, she knew his fascinations and his strange, mysterious power, and she waited in some anxiety for her friend's return.

It grew dusk, and still Florence was absent.

Suddenly a great fear stole into Marion's heart. What if she should never return?

She seated herself at the window of the upper hall, and watched, in almost breathless suspense, for the appearance of the carriage. The short winter twilight faded, and still the trunks did not come.

When the dinner-bell rang, and still there was no sign of Florence, Marion could bear the suspense no longer. Calling Mrs. Neville to her room, she begged her to believe that something was certainly wrong.

"Percy Gladwin," she said, "is not that man's true name. In my youth I knew him well. I was once for two years in his power. I believed myself his wife, for it was not until a seeming priest had blest our union that I would consent to put myself so much in his power as to give him the opportunity to carry me away with him to his home. It is no time to tell you now by what miracle I escaped from his power. Many times he has told me that no woman ever escaped from him and lived; that he would track such a one through tropic heats or Arctic snows, sooner than that she should escape his vengeance. It was the knowledge of this fact which induced Florence to give me a home here. Here, at least, she thought I should be safe."

Mrs. Neville was at first incredulous, but Mr. Neville, less slow to believe ill of his elegant acquaintance, speedily called in the police.

In a half-hour's time it was ascertained that a strange craft, which had been lying at anchor, had toward evening set sail, having first taken on board a party who had driven down the road.

A small steam-tug was sent in pursuit at once, and while Mrs. Neville and Marion were weeping and praying at home the unhappy father and the officers of the law were making all haste upon the track of the villain and his prey.

Meanwhile let us follow the fortunes of Mr. Gladwin and his companion.

"I wish to show you to-day some very fine suburban property, which I have some idea of purchasing for a summer residence. I like to have one residence to which I can escape when I wish to be in solitude. The spot I have in view commands a magnificent view of the water and the opposite shore, and I have somehow taken a violent fancy to it."

Florence, in spite of the warning of her friend, was very much under the spell of her companion's smooth address, and expressed her pleasure at seeing his contemplated purchase.

During that drive Mr. Gladwin exerted to the utmost every fascination which he possessed, and Florence was obliged to confess that she had never before been so highly entertained. He had let in upon her also glimpses of his great wealth; and in the glow of her excited fancy he seemed as noble as a prince.

They reached at length the tract of ground upon which, as he said, Mr. Gladwin had some thoughts of building, and Florence found indeed that the prospect was charming. As they were about to enter the carriage, however, for their return, Mr. Gladwin, discovered, to his great apparent vexation, that one of the springs of the carriage was broken.

"This vehicle," he said, "certainly is unsafe. It will never do to risk your precious life in it; especially as my horses are to-day more than usually difficult of control."

He hesitated for a moment, as if in doubt what course to pursue, and then, shading his eyes with his hand from the rays of the setting sun, he swept the surface of the water with an anxious, inquiring glance.

"I have a yacht," he said, "somewhere out there. If now I could signal her, we might go on board and sail upon this incoming tide far more quickly than we could make the journey by land. And there she is," he added, and taking out a pocket glass, he proceeded to verify his suspicion. "Yes, it is the 'St. Cecilia,'" he went on. "Now if I can signal her, we shall be most fortunate."

He drew a silver whistle from his pocket, and blew a long, shrill blast upon it; then, pausing for a moment, he gave another, and another. At the third whistle a white flag was flung out from the yacht. Mr. Gladwin answered it by waving his handkerchief, and presently a boat was lowered.

During all this time Florence had experienced some

perturbation of mind; still the whole affair seemed so simple that she hardly knew how to account for the misgivings which troubled her. The yacht, meantime, had set sail and approached as near the shore as was practicable. Upon her deck Florence could plainly see a woman's form.

"Why," she said, "there is a lady there!"

"Yes," he replied. "I was preparing a surprise for you. Having little occasion for the services of the craft just at present, I have lent it to my brother-in-law, and he with his family are on board. They are making a cruise along the coast."

Florence's last scruple was allayed by this explanation, and when the boat approached the shore she entered it very willingly, saying:

"This will be a delightful adventure. I am very fond of sailing."

When they reached the deck of the yacht, however, the lady had disappeared. Mr. Gladwin hurried her immediately to the cabin, as if jealous lest the eyes of the crew should rest upon her. Excusing himself instantly, she heard his voices soon after, upon deck, giving orders in a language which she did not even recognize, and very soon the flapping of sails and the rattling of cordage made it clear to her that the yacht was being put under full sail.

The cabin was lighted only by a skylight, but pushing through into a small state-room, the door of which stood partly open, she found there a small window, from which she could discern that in place of going homeward they were in fact making all speed in the opposite direction, and that before an outgoing tide and a favouring gale.

Then for the first time Florence realized her situation. This man could be no other than a villain; and a most bold and daring one at that; and she was utterly in his power.

For two hours she sat in an agony of suspense, expecting every moment to hear his footstep at the outer cabin-door; but Mr. Gladwin was by far too much engaged in making sure his escape to think of minor details now. His craft was but a sailing vessel, light and swift it is true, but any sudden change of wind might put him within easy reach of any swift steamer that might be sent in chase.

A few miles farther on he expected to meet a swift steamer of more than dubious character. Once he could transfer his charge to the cabin of the "Water Rover," he would feel safe in his possession, and it would then be time enough to give the steamer to passion.

There had been clouds about the sunset, and the night shut down dark and wild. The captain of the "St. Cecilia" paced her deck, in constant watch for the signal lights of the "Water Rover." Meantime the wind baffled him, and he was notmaking the progress which he desired. It was near midnight when he first desisted, far astern of him, a light, and a craft which seemed to be holding swiftly on his track.

Calling his skipper, he bade him watch it with his glass, and see if in the darkness he could make out anything of its character.

In a half-hour the man reported:

"It is a steam-tug, sir, and she's giving chase."

Just then the watch-cried out that the signal-light of the "Water Rover" was visible on the starboard quarter.

Gladwin's first impulse, when he learned that justice was already upon his track, had been to seek his victim and make her feel his power while yet he might; but the announcement that the "Water Rover" was at hand changed his purpose. Once on board his gallant craft, with a half-hour the start of his pursuers, he could afford to bid defiance to them. Every nerve must be strained to effect that purpose. It was not now the pleasure of an hour which was at stake but his own life. Taken he vowed he never would be.

By what miraculous agency his pursuers had so soon gained tidings of him he could not dream. Undeceived so impossible did it seem that he was at times half inclined to believe that there must be some mistake.

Suddenly, however, by one of those mental operations which can never be explained, he recalled the moment when he had stood in the shadowy parlour of the Nevilles, and a servant had answered his ring. He caught again the timid but penetrating look which had been turned upon him, and in an instant the truth flashed into his mind.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "it was she. Why did I not know it then? The game is up now if we cannot overhaul the 'Water Rover.' Once on her deck her guns shall blow that steamer out of the water. She shall never go back to bear witness against me. So much I get for breaking my oath never to let a woman escape me. It is my doom. I shall not escape it."

Years before it had been foretold to him that he would meet his fate at the hands of a woman who

had escaped from his power, and, though he did not for an instant waver in his plan, his mind seemed paralyzed, and there was no longer the force in his brain or in his arm that was wont to reside there. Yet he strove to rally his powers.

"Many a time," he said, "I have conquered against greater odds. Let me not give way until my time comes."

The "Water Rover" had answered her master's signal promptly, and was approaching the yacht with all speed. The distance between the two crafts was shortening visibly every moment now, but the swift tug was bearing down with an almost incredible velocity. The game was as well understood upon her deck as upon either of the other vessels, and all a father's fond anxiety, backed by the most liberal offers of reward, was made to stimulate the zeal of both officers and men.

As the chase drew near its close, and the chances seemed to favour the fugitives, the wind suddenly veered to a point which barred his progress effectually. A long tack must be made in the very teeth of the tug, which would necessitate a change of course upon the part of the "Water Rover," and a consequent loss of time.

The pursuers saw their advantage, and hailed it with three rousing cheers; which were plainly heard on board both the opposing vessels.

At that moment the captain of the yacht saw that to reach the "Water Rover" was hopeless, and he gave orders to scuttle the yacht, while he himself went below.

Florence was in an agony of fear, but the first sight of his pallid and desperate face assured her that there was danger abroad to him as well as to her.

"My beautiful Florence," he said, "I told you that the women who esteemed the men of my line must drink of a bitter cup. You will find how true my words are this night. When we left the shore I thought ere this to have made you mine beyond recall, but that maid of yours has put the bounds upon my track sooner than I fancied, and now you must take a leap with me for your life. There is not time even to take one kiss from your sweet lips. Never mind, sweetheart. With good luck we'll board the 'Water Rover' soon; and then there'll be time enough for love."

Florence was pale as a lily. She hated and feared this man, but in spite of all she had a certain despairing admiration for his strength and his determination. "What is it," she said, "that you wish me to do?"

"You will permit me to bind this life-preserver about your waist. It is not exactly the costume of Venus, but it will do you a better service this night. The yacht is scuttled, is already sinking; do you not feel her going down under your feet? A boat is ready, but it may fail us. Hasten now; my hand is upon you, and nothing but death will release my hold. If we drown we go down together."

They had reached the deck, where the seamen were already throwing themselves into the water, trusting to be able to swim to the "Water Rover," or to be picked up by its boats, which were being lowered.

At this instant, too, in answer to a signal from its master, the "Water Rover" opened fire upon the tug.

The dismay of Florence was indescribable. It was soon evident, however, that the position of the craft was such that the firing could do but little execution upon the tug, and all the efforts of the outlaws were therefore concentrated upon the task of rescuing the captain and crew of the yacht.

The boat in which were the captain and Florence carried no light, and for a time it seemed entirely probable that it would reach the steamer under cover of the darkness, but Fate was not to be thus cheated of her prey.

Florence, who was growing accustomed to a sense of danger, and whom the sight of allies so near inspired with a despairing courage, sent out over the sullen darkness a cry which she knew would stir one loyal heart.

"Father!" she called, and at the same moment drawing a small pistol which she had found in the state-room, and secreted about her person for use in the last dire extremity, she suddenly pointed it at her foe and fired.

Gladwin was disabled, but not killed, and again Florence sent forth that shrill, despairing cry:

"Father!"

The pursuers heard it, and, aided by the flash of the pistol, so changed their course that in ten minutes they had reached the boat in which sat the trembling Florence beside the wounded and bleeding outlaw.

Florence was soon rescued. The officers on board the tug were clamorous to arrest her captor, but Mr. Neville interfered.

"Let him alone," he said. "I think his wound fatal. He will be picked up by his men. If we were to take him to town, it would entail explanations,

which now we may happily avoid. We shall sail for France in a week's time, and before we return people will have ceased asking questions."

His counsel prevailed, and in the gray light of morning the tug anchored in the harbour, and Florence was restored to her waiting mother and to Marion.

The "Water Rover," unaware of what had transpired, and busy with the search for the captain's boat, suffered the tug to make good its escape; and as the morning dawned, having failed to discover the missing boat, and fearing, after the adventure of the night, to be found in such dangerous proximity to the coast, departed with all haste.

A little later, some fishermen found upon the shore, washed in by the flood tide, the body of a man with a bullet hole in his breast. They took the body on shore and it was buried.

Marion went to France as companion to Florence, and the friendship which had been cemented by events so wonderful remained faithful and firm through their whole lives.

J. W.

THE UNWHOLESOMENESS OF CAST-IRON STOVES.

THE French Academy having commissioned MM. Morin, Payen, Deville, Bernard, Bussey, and Rémy to investigate this subject, experiments were instituted by them with stoves of cast and wrought-iron, using soft coals, with the view of learning under what condition stoves of metal become unwholesome through the presence of carbonic acid and carbonic oxide in the rooms heated by them. The result of two experiments—one with dry air, the other with moist—were given in the report. Rabbits were made to breathe the air passing over stoves of cast and wrought-iron heated to redness, and afterwards chemical examination of the blood of the animals was made to ascertain the presence of carbonic oxide. The following words are used in giving the results of the experiments:

"If the summary of the experiments made upon rabbits does not permit us to fix with any precision the proportions of carbonic oxide absorbed by their blood, nor that of the oxygen which has been expelled from it, the results all agree to show that the use of stoves of cast-iron heated to a red heat causes in the blood, by the presence of carbonic oxide, an eminently poisonous change whose repetition may become dangerous; while the same method of investigation has not revealed analogous effects when the heat has been produced from stoves of wrought or sheet-iron."

In experiments made prior to the above Morin came to the conclusion that with surfaces of wrought-iron heated to a red heat carbonic oxide is produced, his experiments showing that the passage of the air over cast and wrought-iron heated to redness causes the development of carbonic oxide to an extent noticeably greater in the case of cast-iron than in that of wrought.

In presenting the conclusions or results of the entire series of experiments made upon stoves of cast and wrought-iron during the year the commission reports as follows:

"The carbonic oxide, whose presence has been proved when stoves of cast-iron are used, may arise from several different causes: 1st. The permeability of the stove by that gas, which will pass from the interior of the fire-pot to the exterior. 2nd. The direction of the oxygen of the iron upon the carbon of the cast-iron heated to redness. 3rd. The decomposition of carbonic acid contained in the air by its contact with metal heated to redness. 4th. The influence of the organic dust naturally contained in the air."

Another very important conclusion is arrived at by the commission—viz., that all stoves and heating apparatus of cast-iron, and even those of wrought-iron, should be lined with fire-brick or other substance, so as to prevent them from attaining a red heat. In America, where stoves are generally used, and more anthracite than soft coal is burnt, the subject has long attracted attention; but from the recent rise in the price of fuel in England and the probable large introduction of stoves for the sake of economy, a reference to it here may not be without its use. No more prominent cause of disease in families exists than such devices for burning anthracite coals in cast-iron stoves not provided with good fire-brick linings.

MILLIE CHRISTINE, the double lady, is the subject of a lawsuit by a railway company in France, who contend that she or they ought to travel with two tickets. Miss Christine says that one is sufficient.

ILL-TEMPER.—A single person of sour, sullen temper—what a dreadful thing it is to have such a one in the house! There is not myrrh and aloes and chloride of lime enough in the world to disinfect a single home of such a nuisance as that; no riches, no elegance of mien, no beauty of face, can ever screen

such persons from utter vulgarity. There is one thing which rising persons hate the reputation of more than all others, and that is vulgarity; but, trust me, ill-temper is the vilest thing that the lowest born and ill-bred can ever bring to his home. It is one of the worst forms of impurity. Peevishness in a home is naught but sin in the very temple of love.

LUXURY.—Luxury is a vice which prompts many to run into expenses beyond what their circumstances will admit. And why? Because respect is attached to prodigality, and contempt is shown for those who do not maintain a similar profusion; because the custom of lavish expenditure is universal, and because things that are superfluous, useless and frivolous are rendered almost necessary and indispensable. Here is the mischief of luxury.

MORAL BEAUTY.—What is the beauty of nature but a beauty clothed with moral associations? What is the highest beauty of literature, poetry, fiction, and the fine arts, but a moral beauty which genius has bodied forth for the admiration of the world? And what are those qualities of the human character which are treasured up in the memory and heart of nations—the objects of universal reverence and exaltation, the themes of celebration, of eloquence, and the social song, the cherished idols of admiration and love? Are they not patriotism, heroism, philanthropy, disinterestedness, magnanimity, martyrdom?

HOGARTH'S HOUSE.—Hogarth's house, his little country box at Chiswick, which he left on his last journey to Leicester Square, after having for more than a century escaped any considerable injury, has been let on lease to a neighbouring publisher, who has turned the house into a "sweet-stuff" shop; while the garden, which until of late was a wilderness of half-neglected flowers, has been stripped of these ornaments, for the land is to be used by a florist. The burial place of Hogarth's grave, with their little tablets, are well preserved, and we are glad to learn that the tenant promises to take care of them.

PHASES OF LIFE.—There are some people who seem to be exempt from care and sorrow, so calmly and smoothly do their lives flow on. But in such cases the brightness is generally all at the beginning. By and by a gap is made in the family circle. One link of the chain is suddenly broken. Then in fearfully quick succession follow others, till the whole family seem all at once to dissolve and disappear. With some their brightest days are their latter days. The glory and peace and beauty of the sunset of their lives are in strange contrast to the dark, gloomy, murky morning.

THE PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION.—American advisers state that the designs for the great building in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, for the centennial celebration in 1876, have been finally approved. It will cover 39½ acres, and the plan is similar to that of the Paris Exposition of 1867, but arranged in the form of a parallelogram instead of an ellipse. The materials will be chiefly wood and galvanized iron, and although the structure will be divided into 21 separate pavilions, it will "practically form one vast hall 1,669 ft. long, 705 ft. broad, and 137 ft. high, the courts merely acting as the columns which support an ordinary ceiling." Magnificent vistas, it is added, "are thus secured in all directions, and an area of 17½ acres is visible from a central point."

NEW IMITATION OF SILVER.—A patent has been obtained by M. Pincel-Baudvin for a metallic alloy which is declared to resemble silver better than any other yet known with respect to colour, specific gravity, malleability, ductility, sound, and other characteristics. The new alloy is a compound of copper, nickel, tin, zinc, cobalt, and iron. The following proportions are said to produce a very white metal, perfectly imitating silver:—Copper, 71.00 parts; nickel, 16.50 parts; cobalt, 1.75 parts; tin, 2.50 parts; iron, 1.25 parts; zinc, 7.00 parts. A small quantity of aluminium, about 1½ per cent., may be added. The manufacture is rather peculiar. The first step is to alloy the nickel with its own weight of the copper and the zinc in the proportion of six parts to ten of copper. The nickel alloy, the iron, the rest of the copper, the cobalt, in the form of black oxide, and the charcoal are then placed all together in a plumbago crucible. This is then covered over with charcoal and exposed to great heat. When the whole is melted the heat is allowed to subside, and the alloy of zinc and copper is added when the temperature is just sufficient to melt it. This done, the crucible is taken off the fire and its contents stirred with a hazel stick; the tin is then added, first being wrapped in paper and then dropped into the crucible. The alloy is again stirred and finally poured into the moulds; it is now ready to be rolled and wrought just like silver. A great portion of the zinc is volatilized in the act of fusion, so that very little remains in the alloy. The superiority of this metal is said to depend principally on the cobalt, to which is due its peculiar argentine lustre.



[HUSBAND AND WIFE.]

AN INCIDENT OF MY WEDDING TOUR.

I HAVE always been opposed to the postponement of weddings for any length of time on account of a death. What can soften the anguish of a family bereavement like the assumption of new and tender ties? Or what can restore impaired strength like change of scene? The counsel of a judicious mother saved me needless suffering; and it was not many weeks after the first great sorrow of our lives that I left home on my wedding tour.

During our journey my husband left the carriage in which we were seated, to smoke for a half-hour, as he said, in an adjoining carriage.

He had scarcely gone out when a lady, who had been occupying a seat nearly opposite ours, arose and came toward me. I had particularly noticed her neat attire and youthful appearance, and wondered to see her travelling alone. She wore a plain gray poplin dress, trimmed with black braid, with a tunic, and a straw bonnet with wide pink ribbon strings, and pink rosebuds for the inside trimming. Her gray barège veil was thrown back. She came toward me hesitatingly, resting her little gloved hand on the back of the seat, and looked at me with a bewildered yet an earnest expression, which at once interested me.

"May I sit by you a few minutes?" she asked, timidly, and in a very low voice.

"Certainly," I replied, making room for her by taking up a book that lay on the seat.

After a moment's silence she said:

"Indeed I ought to ask your forgiveness for coming to you; but I have been trying for a long time to make up my mind to speak, and, madam, you look as if you would listen to me."

I looked her full in the face, moved by the tone of deep feeling unmistakable in the words she uttered. She was evidently very young, and extremely prepossessing in appearance, if not pretty.

Her features were regular and very delicate; her complexion was fair and pale; her low forehead was banded with masses of soft brown hair. Her eyes were large and dark gray, shaded with very long lashes; they had, I thought, a singular attraction; a tender shyness was in their depths, and I saw that they were suffused with moisture. My sympathies were stirred as I asked:

"What can I do for you?"

She hesitated, and I could see that she trembled.

"I shall be glad to assist you," I continued, and made a movement as if to draw out my purse.

She started and coloured painfully as she prevented me.

"Not that, madam!" she said. "I do not want that kind of help. But I do want advice. I want to know what I ought to do. Oh, madam! I am in great—in very great distress!"

"You have lost a friend?" I asked, tears welling into my own eyes as I thought the same affliction might have visited us both.

"No, ma'am—that is, if you mean by death!" she faltered, with a kind of dry, gasping sob, as if her heart were aching with grief. "I may have lost my best friend—at least—oh, forgive me! How I wish I could be certain what to do!"

She covered her face, and burst into passionate tears. I soothed her gently, and after a short time she was able to tell me her story.

She was, though young, older in wedded life than myself, for she had been married a little less than a year. Her husband was a merchant. She had left him a few weeks before to pay a visit to her mother, who lived on a farm in Kent.

"Oh, madam, I was so happy there! I cannot tell you how happy! It was my first visit. And to be at home once more, with my dear mother and young sisters and my brothers! And all so lovely at this pleasant season! Was I wrong to be so happy?"

"Wrong? Surely not," I replied.

"I wrote," she continued, "to tell my husband what a delightful visit I was enjoying at home. I wrote many times, and got no answer. At last he sent me this."

She drew out a folded paper from her bag and handed it to me, bidding me read it. As I did so she turned away, concealing her face; but I knew that she was weeping.

It was a brief letter, but written in a manner showing the hand of a man of education. But every line was barbed with refined cruelty! He expressed satisfaction in hearing that Emily—so he called her—was so very happy, as she described herself. It was certainly natural that she should enjoy the society of her nearest kindred; and he did not blame her, nor regret it. On the contrary, he was very glad of it; and he proposed to her to extend indefinitely the visit she was enjoying so very much. Indeed he really thought it would be by far the best thing for her to remain with her mother and family, and not to return to him at all. He would send her money whenever she wanted it. He urged her to stay with her relatives, and seemed to have made up his mind to insist upon a separation.

The poor young wife looked eagerly in my face as I handed her back the letter.

"What do you think of it?" she asked, in a quivering voice.

"It is not a kind letter," I began.

"Oh, but my husband was always kind to me—always!" she cried, quickly.

"And he loved you?"

"He seemed to love me. Why else did he want me to marry him?" she asked, innocently.

"True. And you loved—you love him?"

She clasped her hands, and her eyes filled again. There was no need of an answer in words.

"What ought I to do?" she asked, searching my face with anxious scrutiny. "Must I obey him? What was the best thing to do after receiving such a letter?"

"What did your friends advise?"

"They wanted me to stay with them."

"What was your first impulse? What did your own heart prompt you to do?" I said.

"To go to my husband at once!" was her emphatic reply. "So I came away directly. I did not wait an hour to think of it; though they all said I should not come."

"You did right!" I exclaimed. "Just right!"

"Did I? Oh, I am so glad you think so!" and in her enthusiasm she seized my hand, pressing it closely in both hers. "But they all reproached me for coming after a man who had shown he did not care for me and wanted to get rid of me. After I came into the train I began to think perhaps they were right and my husband did not want me; and after he had written to desire me to stay away from him he might think me forward and indelicate in coming back directly. Do you think, madam, what I have done can be thought too forward?"

"Too forward!" I echoed. "My dear child!"—I felt myself quite the matron already—"my dear child, it is not a lover you are going to reclaim! It is your husband! Who has a better right to go to him, or be with him?"

"So I thought—so I think!" the young creature said, her face suffused with a blush which I thought infinitely becoming. "But—but—"

"But what, child? Surely nobody could think of blaming you!"

She looked down, and her face was pale again. At length she said, with a return of timid hesitation:

"My husband is very much my superior. He has had a splendid education; has been at college, and has mingled in excellent society. I never could talk with him on many subjects, for I have had only plain schooling, and I never was much in society. He may have found that I could not make him happy, and he may really wish to cast me off."

"It is not possible!" I cried, catching her hand, and restraining with difficulty the impulse I felt to clasp her in my arms. "No man could wish to lose such a sweet little wife who loves him as you do! No, no, dear! If your husband is a man of education he will prize you all the more, knowing how rare such women are! Besides, you can educate yourself to his level."

"Can I?" she asked, her eyes dilating.

"Certainly. I have often heard of wives acquiring a noble education after marriage. But you must apply yourself, and study—study hard."

"I will! Oh, I will!" she exclaimed. "I will study with all my might, be sure of that."

"And you must seek guidance and assistance," I went on, solemnly, "from One who never fails to listen to prayer. Are you in the habit of praying?" She drooped her face, and I saw tears glisten on her crimsoning cheeks.

"I have not prayed as I ought," she answered. "But I will—I will—from this time forward."

"Then you may be sure of success," I said, encouragingly.

Some minutes passed while the train stopped at a station. After we had started again she said:

"I thank you, madam, so much! But for what you have said to me I think I should have got off here, and taken the return train to my mother. I felt so afraid my husband would not welcome me."

"He is living—you said—"

"In Leeds. And I am doubtful now what to do when I get there. I have an aunt living near. Had I not better go to her house and stop all night, or send word to my husband and wait for his answer? What would you advise me to do?"

She was trembling, and her rapid changes of colour showed suppressed excitement. I considered a moment. Then I gave my advice, in consideration of her agitation, that she should go first to the house of her aunt.

"You will be rested in a short time," I added, "and can then decide for yourself what to do next. Do not send word to your husband; but if you are strong enough go to him as soon as you are rested. Go before you send him any word."

She made up her mind to this; and after a little farther conversation I inquired her name, and wrote it in my memorandum-book, handing her my own card. I asked her to write to me, for I felt anxious to know the result.

We arrived at Leeds long before dusk; and, as we were going on, I requested my husband to assist the young stranger to alight, and parted from her with feelings of warm good will.

On the third day afterward I received a letter from her. She had stopped first at her aunt's house. But her impatience would not let her rest. She walked to her husband's place of business. He was seated at his desk writing, when the slight figure of his wife appeared in the doorway.

As he turned to see who it was she sprang forward, flung her arms around his neck, and exclaimed, sobbing:

"Oh, George! are you not glad to see me? How could you think I could stay away from you?"

That was all the reproach she made; and it was sufficient. The husband was all penitence in a moment for his absurd jealousy and his cruel letter.

The young wife's letter to me expressed so much gratitude that I verily believe she thought me the author of her happiness.

I have sometimes imagined she might have fallen into the hands of a proud or a "strong-minded" woman, who would have deemed it due to the dignity of her sex that she should obey to the letter the unkind mandate she had received, and who would have argued that a husband so unfeeling was not worth leaving kindred for. But the true wife's loving heart pointed out the simplest and the best way. I always took to myself some credit for my sensible counsel—the "word spoken in season." C. C.

If the English know best how to dress in the daytime, Frenchmen shoot ahead of them in the night season. A tasteful Frenchman's dress-coat is a whole symphony in cloth. It has no creases or twists, no discord in its universal harmony, and the little slip of red ribbon which knights are privileged to wear shows better on it than an eighteen pennyworth of flowers.

FINES FOR DRUNKENNESS IN THE ARMY.—The appropriation of the money accruing from the fines for drunkenness in the army has been found a question difficult satisfactorily to solve. At the time the fine system was established it was ordained that the sums so collected should not be treated as belonging to the Exchequer, but should be utilized to reward well-conducted soldiers who by their example had helped to put down the evil habit which is the bane of the service. The money, however, collected from the infliction of fines soon unfortunately reached such a considerable sum that it became apparent that the question must be immediately considered, and that rules should be framed for its distribution before the accumulation attained to an unmanageable extent. A War-Office Committee was consequently appointed, and to its deliberations and report we are indebted for the circular which has just been published. Although no doubt the men from whose pockets the fund is drawn would much rather that the army should profit by their misconduct than the public Exchequer, yet to allow the well-conducted men to benefit directly from their comrades' folly and consequent punishment might have given rise to ill-feeling which it was most undesirable to create, and the special labours of the committee were consequently directed to distributing the fund in the most equitable and at the same time the most judicious manner. The system of making the fines' fund regimental and distributable only within the ranks of the corps has consequently been dis-

carded, and the money accruing from all corps is now capitalized and is held generally available for the reward of well-conducted men throughout the service. This general fund is to be appropriated to the purpose of granting gratuities to well-conducted non-commissioned officers and men on their discharge from the army, and regulations have been framed with a view to its division. The scale of gratuities is to be regulated annually according to the state of the general fund, and any change will be notified from time to time in general orders.

THE TUSSAH SILKWORM.

CAPTAIN COUSMAKER, of Bombay, appears to have devoted some of his leisure hours to watching the habits of this insect, and endeavouring to collect all possible information relative to its cultivation. For the whole line of jungle country between Tanna and Ankola, a distance of 330 miles, he found this worm, and at three other stations, Satala, Kohdpoor and Dharwar, he successfully reared it. He describes the process of forming cocoons as follows:

"The cocoons are oval in shape, silvery-white or yellow in colour, irregularly reticulated with a coarse, reddish silk. In size they vary very much, some being as large as 2½ in. long and 1 one-sixth in. in diameter, and others again as small as 1 one-sixth in. by five-sixths in.; outside they are somewhat rough, but inside they are hard, smooth, and glossy. According to Dr. Shortt, of Madras, the average weight of the chrysalis is 130 grs.; of the cocoon containing the chrysalis, 150 grs.; of the empty cocoon, 20 grs.; and of the silk when reeled off, 12 grs. It is very interesting to watch the caterpillar forming the cocoon, and a knowledge of the *modus operandi* is essential to the person who reels off the silk, in order to enable him to obtain the greatest length possible at one time.

"The caterpillar has two kinds of silk; that which it spins is reddish, and of this the pedicle and outside network, or cradle of the cocoon, is made. This silk consists of several threads of different lengths, but the other kind is generally unbroken from beginning to end. It is of a very delicate shade of fawn, nearly white, beautifully glossy and elastic, and being spun from a double spinneret consists of two fibres, which for the most part adhere together when the silk is being reeled off. The different lengths of the threads of the two kinds of silk are to be accounted for as follows: The caterpillar, when about to form its cocoon, brings two or three leaves together, attaching them with short lengths of the red silk in a few places, so as to make a rough kind of house, inside of which it attaches a few threads here and there, so as to make a cradle of coarse network; then it begins to make the pedicle, or cable, which shall support the cocoon when the leaves shrivel up and fall away from the twig. In making the pedicle the caterpillar, firmly grasping the twig with its membranaceous feet, sways its body backwards and forwards as far round the twig as it can reach, and back again, attaching its silk thread over thread, and in this way soon completes a strong dark-red cord along the twig, and in a ring round it. Sometimes while making this a misgiving crosses its mind that the cradle is not strong enough, or is losing its shape, so it hurries down—if such an expression can be applied to a caterpillar of its size and make—turns itself round and round in the cradle, putting a thread here and there as may be required, and, arching its body, with a muscular effort gives the proper oval shape to it. This way of working fully accounts for the many separate lengths of red silk which are found when the pedicle and cradle are thoroughly dissolved.

"The cradle once made and attached to the pedicle by many of the threads which have from time to time been carried down into the network, the caterpillar begins to make the cocoon proper of the fawn-coloured silk. The silk is spun off by the same motion of swaying from side to side, but with a much more contracted motion, and thus in layers of loops overlapping one another is the wall of the cocoon built up. There are four or six lines of loops in the circumference of the cocoon, and as they all meet at the top and bottom, where they are simply stuck together with a peculiar kind of gum, the mere dissolving of this causes them to fly apart and thereby make an opening for the moth to get out.

"After the caterpillar has spun a layer of silk thick enough to conceal itself it discharges some kind of gum or cement, thick and white like plaster of Paris, and then, with the muscular action alluded to before, it causes this gum to thoroughly permeate the whole cocoon and solidify the wall. In this manner it goes on spinning layer after layer of loops and cementing them all together until the whole of its silk is exhausted, and the wall of the cocoon becomes so hard that it requires a sharp penknife to cut through it. The chrysalis now is safe from birds, but squirrels, rats, and a few insects do manage to gnaw their way into the cocoon.

"The amount of silk contained in one of these

cocoons may be roughly estimated as over half a mile of the fawn-coloured kind; for I once succeeded in getting 16 grs. reeled off one single cocoon in an unbroken double thread. This is more than four times the weight of silk procurable from the common silkworm, which, according to Count Dandolo, is three and eighty-four hundredth grains, and is in length half a mile. I have repeatedly tested several fibres of Tussur silk, and find that it is about three times as strong as the common silk, and also that it is about three times as thick, for the ordinary waving thread contains three times more fibres of common silk than it does of Tussur silk. If, therefore, the weight of the Tussur silk in the cocoon be taken as only three times as much as that of the ordinary silk, the length of fibre in both cocoons will, I imagine, prove to be about the same.

"The ring at the end of the pedicle which has been spun round the twig is a most necessary provision of nature, for it often happens that either the caterpillar has been unable to attach its cocoon to a leaf, or that during the long time the cocoon remains unburied in the tree the leaf or leaves to which the cocoon was at first attached become separated from it, and then the cocoon hangs suspended from the twig like a berry.

"As a rule, there are certainly two crops in the year; the moths of the first batch come out in about four or six weeks after the first lot of worms (which come out at the commencement of the rains) have spun; those of the second batch remain quiescent until the rains begin again, that is to say until May. As this entails the chrysalis remaining in the cocoon as long as eight months, exposed to the hottest sun and occasional thunderstorms, the cocoon had need to be made of a hard, impenetrable material. So indestructible is it that Bheels, and other tribes which live in the jungles, use the cocoon as an extinguisher to the bamboo tube in which they keep the 'Faltia' or cotton-ropes tinder, used by them for lighting their tobacco and the slow matches of the matchlocks. The cocoon is also cut into a long spiral band, and used for binding the barrel of the matchlock to the stock, being, as the natives say, unaffected by either water or fire."

The Tussah silks of China are now largely used, and although these silks can never hope to rival those of the silkworm proper, fashion, which can do much to make or mar, is now giving a helping hand to all Tussahs, as the fabrics exhibited at the International Exhibition last year fully prove.

COFFEE.—A small quantity is produced at Guadalupe, near Pacasmayo, which is second to none in richness of flavour. Its excellence is due to the fact that it is grown in the shade, and with the greatest care. This "Goyburn" coffee, as it is called, brings fifty cents a pound at the hacienda. A very choice article (valued at 4s. 2d. a pound) is made by selecting the smallest Goyburn; but it is not in the market. Fine coffee is also grown at Huancayo and Urubamba.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.—At the recent meeting of Trades Unions at Sheffield Mr. Owen moved that the Congress believes that the time has come when the working men throughout the country should take up the question of technical education, with a view of improving their skill, and that schools for that purpose be established. This was unanimously carried. If the working men desire to secure for technical instruction all the advantages that they ought to have, they should petition, and move their members to support the views of the Society of Arts in asking for a Minister of Education, to be responsible for all museums bearing on technical instruction.

BEAUTY OF THE WAVES.—Nothing can be more superb than the green of the Atlantic waves when circumstances are favourable to the exhibition of the colour. As long as a wave remains unbroken no colour appears; but when the foam just doubles over the crest, like an Alpine snow-cornice, under the cornice we often see a display of the most exquisite green. It is metallic in its brilliancy. But the foam is necessary to its production. The foam is first illuminated, and it scatters the light in all directions; the light which passes through the higher portion of the wave alone reaches the eye, and gives to that portion its matchless colour. The folding of the wave, producing, as it does, a series of longitudinal protuberances and furrows, which act like cylindrical lenses, introduces variations in the intensity of the light and materially enhances its beauty.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH AT WINDSOR.—It is said that the Queen intends to accord to her new daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Edinburgh, a royal reception at Windsor Castle. The greeting is to be marked by all the impressive grandeur that can be comprised in a State ceremonial, and amongst the festivities which await the august bride and bridegroom will be a State banquet in St. George's Hall, in honour of which Her Majesty will so

far depart from her usual habits of seclusion as to preside in person. The young Etouians have requested permission to draw the carriage containing the illustrious guests from the railway station to the castle entrance, a privilege which has been accorded to them on many similar occasions. In this instance, however, the offer has been declined, perhaps as possibly detracting somewhat from the "State" character of the reception; and in compensation the youthful courtiers will be awarded a coign of vantage in the castle yard, where their hearty cheers will be not the least sincere and welcome greeting of the princess and her husband.

HOUSEKEEPING.

HUMAN nature has not radically changed in a century and a half; and there is no good deal of it in most classes of society. An increased demand of wealth does not of necessity bring with it an increased skill in its employment. A man who has been so debased by extreme poverty that he has only cultivated his animal appetites inevitably regards higher wages merely as a means of gratifying them more fully. A gentleman whose income is raised from one to three thousand a year cannot make precisely the same error; he cannot, that is, spend the whole entire two thousand exclusively upon his stomach, but he may easily discover means of getting rid of it not much more elevating. If we were content to live upon the same scale as our forefathers, and to use all our surplus means for public-spirited purposes, or for refined pleasures, the difference between our civilization and theirs would be much more marked than it is. Unluckily it is much plainer that a modern gentleman has more luxuries than his father than that he leads on the whole a nobler and more intellectual life.

Doubtless there is an improvement in very many respects. We are not so coarse in our tastes or so brutal in our manners as the leaders of the old-fashioned school; but perhaps we devote nearly as large a proportion of our energies to mere frivolities which do little good to ourselves or anybody else. And therefore it is less necessary to teach people how to grow rich—a lesson which they are perfectly well disposed to learn for themselves—than to teach them how to use their wealth when they have got it. In the scientific language which imposes upon us so much integration is as essential a part of evolution as differentiation. In simpler words, the improvement of the social machinery must be followed by an adaptation of our old instincts to our new position, or the total result will be decay instead of development.

The question of domestic service is, as we are truly told, part of a wider change. We are accustomed to lament over the widening gap between different classes. If in old days a bit of work was required in your house, you went to the village carpenter, whom you had known from infancy, who had a character to lose, and who probably stood in more or less of a friendly relation towards you. Between you and him there was a mutual confidence which was some guarantee for his doing his work honestly. Now you go to a great employer of labour to whom you represent an infinitesimal unit in the general public. He sends for a man who is too independent to care much for his employer, and who cares still less for you. He does the work or scamp it according to circumstances, and the chances are that neither of you will ever see the other's face again. You gravely complain that the man doesn't take a pride in his work, and take occasion to lament the progress of socialism, communism, and other diabolical inventions of modern revolutionists. The political economist laughs at you, and tells you that is all owing to the inevitable progress of differentiation. You might as well complain of the rising of the tide, or find fault with the procession of the equinoxes. Classes have drifted, and will drift, farther apart as certainly as society makes progress, and all lamentations over the process are simply so much empty sentimentalism. The tendency is for all classes to become independent of each other, and for society to resolve itself into a chaos of disconnected units.

If this were, in fact, the last word to be said upon the subject, it must be admitted that the prospect would not be encouraging. The old means of preserving sympathy between classes are to be destroyed, and nothing is to take their place; the world is not approaching a millennium, but drifting into utter anarchy. The political economist may convince us that time cannot be made to run backwards, but it will be at the price of demonstrating that going forwards means moral deterioration. Some very excellent people pretty nearly accept that conclusion. As they watch the disappearance of the old ties, and fail to see any adequate substitute provided for them, they turn pessimists, and indulge in sweeping denunciations of all those changes which are the texts of popular orators about progress. Now, pessimism is a very uncomfortable frame of mind, if a

too complacent optimism is apt to be an irritant. To avoid it, however, we must believe that in some way or other the benevolence, the loyalty, and the sympathy which displayed themselves under the old system will not be destroyed, but find new and it may be hoped more effective channels for uniting themselves under the new.

BE IN EARNEST.

No matter what you undertake, be in earnest about it.

Nothing can be accomplished without earnestness and concentration. The man who begins a work of any kind must make everything bend before that undertaking, if he would achieve success. He must literally clear the track before him.

Never undertake to do two things at once. The mind cannot entertain many ideas at the same time, and no one has more than two hands to work with, you know.

What we call luck is only dogged and persistent earnestness. Before the efforts of a man who is resolved to conquer what he has undertaken impossibilities become possible. He has in his vocabulary no such word as impossible! He does not dream of the possibility of failure. Obstacles only incite him to fresh efforts. He tramples on opposition—he scales the stubborn mountains of resistance, and pitches his tent in the green fields of success which lie beyond.

If, when the Pilgrim Fathers first landed on that barren, wintry shore, they had looked upon the great forests, and seen therein no possibility of smiling homesteads—if, instead of bravely laying the axe at the root of the tree, they had sunk down by their helpless wives and children, and exclaimed: "I cannot! It is impossible!" as we so often hear the men of to-day exclaim over some dreaded task, where would have been the busy cities and villages which now raise their voices of industry throughout the length and breadth of the land?

The famous battle of Marengo was at first lost to the French, but Bonaparte looked at his watch and said to Napoleon: "It is but two o'clock, and there is still time to win victory from defeat!" And his daring cavalry charge was made, and victory was indeed won!

And so in the ordinary concerns of life, if a man would be conqueror he must be in earnest, and never give up. He may die with his hand on the wheel of the ocean steamer, or with his shoulder to the plough, or with his sword in hand upon the battle field, but he must never flinch from the path of duty!

Heroes, whom the world delights to praise and honour, are earnest men! All men who have ever become great were earnest men!

Ministers of the gospel who have become famous as "fishers of men" were, and are (for there are some such living to-day) earnest, persevering men! And if a man would carry conviction to the hearts of those who listen to him, be the theme what it may, he must be in earnest! He must believe himself, in order to make others believe.

And so, friends, whatever you undertake bend your whole energies to the work, and be in earnest! K. T.

A SINGULAR TREE.—In the island of Goa, near Bombay, there is a singular tree called "the sorrowful tree"—because it only flourishes in the night. At sunset no flowers are to be seen, and yet, half an hour after, it is quite full of them. They yield a sweet smell; but the sun no sooner begins to shine on them than some of them fall off, and others close up; and thus it continues flowering in the night during the whole year.

PAINTED DOGS.—A curious practice exists amongst certain tribes of the South American Indians of painting their dogs. The appearance of these animals, as might be assumed, is most peculiar, and a stranger ignorant of the customs of the people would be at a loss to account for the peculiarity of their appearance. They are to be seen of all colours—yellow, blue, green, and scarlet; whilst others are mottled with every variety of tint. A South American traveller, who recently accompanied a party of natives on a tapir hunt, says that it is the custom among many of the tribes of the South American Indians to dye not only their own bodies but the hairy coats of their dogs with brilliant colours obtained from vegetable juices such as huito, yellow rock, and indigo. The light gray, often white, hair of these animals favours the staining process, and the effect produced pleases the eye of their savage masters, but to a stranger the effect is fantastical. "I could not," he says, "restrain my laughter when I first scanned the cures in their fanciful coats; picture to yourself a pack of scarlet, orange, and purple dogs."

A BRILLIANT IDEA.—A gentleman with an inquisitive mind, being recently struck with the offer, per

bill in a parlour window of the north-east of London, to teach Hebrew at a remarkably low figure, stepped in, met an old acquaintance, who at once thought it wise to be candid, and confessed thus:—"Well, you see, sir, this is an honest way of getting a living. Every Monday and Wednesday I take lessons myself, and every Tuesday and Thursday I give lessons to others. It pays me, and at the same time I am learning something myself." The gentleman asked, "But why not apply yourself to some modern language, such as French, Italian, or German; I should think you would get more pupils than you do for Hebrew?" "Oh, no," he replied; "Hebrew is the dodge. Everybody can teach French or German, but there's only a few as can teach Hebrew. You see, young chaps now-a-days pretend to be learned, and when they are contending against one another in Mechanics' Institutions in these parts, and such places, the one as knows how to read Hebrew just puts a book into the other's hands, and says, 'Read that for me!' It's a licker at once. All the clever ones want to know is the alphabet, and then they can gammon others that they are Hebrew scholars." He was evidently living comfortably.

FACTIE.

How to turn people's heads.—Come into a concert late in thick boots.

Lying too much in bed is a bad habit, but not so bad as lying too much out of it.

If you would make yourself agreeable wherever you go, listen to the grievances of others, but never relate your own.

A NEWLY appointed naval officer, while in a gale, was seized with sea sickness of such violence as to cause him immediately to throw up his commission.

GOING is well enough before marriage, but the billing doesn't come till after; and then it comes from the tradesman.

AN exuberant youth said to a supposed friend, "Hallo, Joe! Oh, excuse me, I thought you were another man!" Laconic stranger replies, "I am."

WOMEN are said to have stronger attachments than men. It is evinced in little things. A man is often attached to an old hat; but did you ever know of a woman having an attachment for an old bonnet?

"ONE might have heard a pin fall," is a proverbial expression of silence; but it has been eclipsed by the French phrase, "You might have heard the unfolding of a lady's cambric handkerchief."

ARTEMUS WARD once remarked that he had heard of persons being ruined by large fortunes, and added, reflectively, that he thought, if ruin must befall him, he should prefer to have it come in this form.

A MAN brags that all the furniture and flooring of his house is made of live oak, but his wife, who does the hard work of the house, says it is nothing but scrub oak.

"JOHN, if Mr. Jones comes before my return, tell him that I'll meet him here before two o'clock." "Ay, ay, sir; but what shall I tell him if he doesn't come?"

THE WAY OF IT.—The old are allured by gold—the young by pleasure—the weak by flattery—cowards by fear—the courageous by ambition—a thousand baits for each taste, each bait concealing the same deadly hook.

FATHER, did you ever have another wife besides mother?" "No, my boy; what possessed you to ask such a question?" "Because I saw in the old family Bible that you married Anna Duntin, 1816; and that isn't mother, for her name is Sally Smith."

DEGENERATE DAYS!

Publican: "Call this a general election? Why, it's all over in about a fortnight, and—"

Free and Independent Voter: "And not a si-pun-note among 'em."—Punch.

THE OBJECT OF LEGISLATION.—"What do you consider the object of legislation?" "The greatest good to the greatest number." "What do you consider the greatest number?" "continued his lordship. "Number one, my lord," was the commoner's prompt reply.

"IN MEDIO TUTISSIMUS."

Country Practitioner: (about to go up to London on business) "I shan't be more than ten days at the farthest, Mr. Fawcetts. You'll visit the patients regularly, and take care that none of 'em slip through your fingers—or get well—during my absence!"—Punch.

TRIALS OF A NEW SERVANT.

Mistress: "My goodness alive, Bridget, what are you doing? here's my fine new tea-kettle with the bottom melted out."

Bridget: "Didn't yees tell me to put it on the fire for supper, an' I did, and I tho't it was strange yees said nothing about putting water in it."

DRAWING AN INFERENCE.—"John," said a gentleman to the beadle of a country parish, "ye has been see long about the minister's hand that I dare

say ye could preach a sermon yersel' now."—"Ah, no, sir," replied John, "I couldna preach a sermon, but maybe I could draw an inference."—"Weel, John," said the querist, humouring the quiet vanity of the beadle, "what inference could ye draw frae this text: 'A wild ass snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure?'"—"Weel, sir, I wad draw this inference—he wad snuff a lang time before he wad fatten upon't."

AN Irish juror having applied to the judge to be excused from serving on account of deafness, the judge said: "Could you hear my charge to the jury, sir?"—"Yes, I heard your honour's charge," said Paddy, "but I couldn't make sense out of it." Pat was let off.

A FARRIER near Aberdeen, where all the witty things happen, lately made out a bill to a farmer, whose Christian name was Jacob, which he contrived to spell without using one single letter contained in the word Jacob. It would puzzle some people perhaps more learned than the farrier to put five letters together, none of which are in the word Jacob, and make it sound so well as Gekrup.

NOTHING INTERESTING.

"Charles," said a young lady to her lover, "there is nothing interesting in the paper to-day, is there, dear?"

"No, love, but I hope there will be one day, when we both shall be interested."

The lady blushed, and said, of course:

"For shame, Charles."

COOKING FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.—"I wouldn't, when I'm married, enter into housekeeping in the kitchen department, nor be a cook for the whole world!" exclaimed a fashionable young lady to her betrothed lover. "Of course not," he replied. "If you were to cook for the whole world, you would never get through your work; but you'll be able to manage it nicely for our little family."

SMITH'S TURN.—Jones had worried Smith with conundrums very often, and now it was Smith's turn. "Guess what I did last night," said Smith. Jones thought of sundry improbable things, and suggested the making of a speech, the doing of a kindness, the getting himself into a lock-up, and finally gave up the conundrum in despair. "Well," said Smith, in a triumphant tone, "I slept."

MOTTO FOR A MINISTER.—Mr. Lowe, on the part of his ministerial colleagues, accepts the accusation, and glories in the avowal, that their acts have been those of a "harassing Government." The late Chancellor of the Exchequer and present Home Secretary appears to aim, on principle, at gaining popularity by systematically making things unpleasant. His motto should be, "What's the odds so long as you're miserable?"—*Punch*.

TUTORSHIP.

"You say, Mr. Springles, that Mr. Jacobs was your teacher. Does the Court understand from that that you received your education from him?"

"No, sir. By tutor I mean that he learnt me to play on the French horn. He taught me to foot—hence I call him my tutor."

"Ah! the Court understood you differently. Call the next witness."

A PHILOSOPHICAL LOVER.

A love-smitten gentleman, after conversing awhile with a lady on the interesting topic of matrimony, concluded at last with the emphatic question:

"Will you have me?"

"I am sorry to disappoint you," replied the lady, "and hope my refusal will not give pain; but I must answer 'No.'"

"Well, well, that will do," said her philosophical lover; "and now suppose we change the subject."

A CHANGE REQUIRED.

"Do you eat well?" asked a pill vendor who was in the process of manufacturing a patient.

"Yes, very well."

"Do you sleep well?"

"Yes."

"Eh? you do, eh? That's not exactly the thing for one in your condition. I'll do away all that for you. Take four of these every morning and four more after dinner. You'll soon see a change."

PIOUS SCRIPPIES.

Auntie: "Well, it is a pretty Valentine, Annie. Do you know who sent it?"

Annie: "Ye'eh, l'it Frank 'Tanley, l'it my feet-beart!"

Auntie: "Why, I thought it was Georgie!"

Annie: "No, I don't like Georgie, auntie, he's the very wicked in church. Do you know he eat's a great big lot of hardbake there every Thunday, auntie, and never giv' me a bit!"—*Fun*.

A GENTLEMAN built a wing to his house, consisting of a cellar, a library on the ground floor, and a bedroom above. He asked the opinion of a friend about it, who replied, "My dear fellow, I am sorry to see that you have lost your senses." "How?" exclaimed the other. "Why, a bon vivant and a literary man,

as you are, to read over your wine, and to sleep over your books."

HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.—The increasing taste displayed by domestic servants for the amusements of their employers is sufficiently indicated by the title of a newly published work—"Cook on Billiards." When may we look for "Page on the Piano," "Footman on Football," etc., etc.?*—Fun*.

NOON TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC.

Oh, the breakfast table fresh!

Tax off coffee, sugar, tea.

For the grocer

(Scan it closer)

What a blessing that will be!

Duties lowered, directly we

Prices raised are safe to see.

Great concession;

Fat possession

Of the breakfast table free!—*Punch*.

ON THE BOIL.

A northern firm thus advertises in the *Telegraph*:

A PRACTICAL manager wanted for a sugar refinery in Greenock. Will have a boiler under him. Must be a man of education, and experienced either in sugar refining or chemical manufacturing. Salary 600*l.* at first, etc.

We really do not think the salary is sufficient for a man who is to pass through life sitting over a boiler in momentary expectation of an explosion. Few people nowadays care to have a statue—still fewer are ambitious for a bust!—*Fun*.

MYSTERY.

Listen, listen to the breeze

Murmuring among the trees!

"All is mystery!"

Tell me, breezes, soft and low,

Tell me, zephyrs, that doth blow,

With thy strange, uncertain flow,

What the mystery!

Listen, listen to the stream,

Babbling over doth it seem—

"All is mystery;"

Tell me, streamlet, rippling by,

With thy babble and thy sigh,

With thy sweet-voiced warblers shy,

What the mystery!

Listen, listen to the wave,

Singing to the sailor brave—

"All is mystery;"

Tell me, tell me, waves, so bright,

Sparkling in the sunny light,

With thy cresting diamond dight,

What the mystery!

Listen, listen to the rain

Pattering upon the pane—

"All is mystery;"

Tell me, rain drop, tell to me

What thou say'st incessantly,

What thou say'st so tearfully,

What the mystery!

Mystery, oh, mystery!

Life and time are mysteries;

"All is mystery!"

Thus the sunshine and the rain,

Thus the pleasure and the pain,

Birth and death, despair and fame,

All are mystery. F. A. B.

GEMS.

He who studies himself between two ships will certainly be drowned.

DESERVE friends, and you will have them. The world is teeming with kind-hearted people, and you have only to carry a kind, sympathetic heart in your own bosom to call out goodness and friendship from others.

The only way of keeping a secret is to forget it as soon as communicated. You may have a considerable reputation for consistency in this matter, thus easily acquired. The only secret worth knowing in this life is how one man can contrive to be better off than another; all the rest is mere alchemy.

LET man enjoy what he will in after life, if his childhood has been blessed with the care and kindness of a judicious mother, there will come moments when the cup of pleasure will be dashed from his lips as tasteless, in comparison with those hours of sweet and social intercourse, when he first learned to look for a pervading spirit in the realms of nature—to welcome all the animated and joyous creatures of earth as members of his own wide brotherhood, and to hail the beams of morning as pledges of the inexhaustible beneficence which created both life and light, and ordained them as blessings to mankind.

THE EARTH'S MOVEMENTS.—The earth is going round the sun at the rate of sixty-six thousand miles

an hour, or eleven hundred times faster than the fastest express train moves. The earth revolves on its axis at a very high speed, proportioned to the distance of its surface from the axis. At the equator it is ten hundred and forty miles an hour, or seventeen a minute; at Rekiawitz, a polar town, it is seven and a half miles a minute; at the poles it is nil. The earth has several other movements, one of the less exactly measured being that through space in commotion with the whole solar system, which is estimated at four hundred and eighty-seven thousand miles a day.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TEA CAKE.—One cup of sour milk; one cup of raisins; one cup of sugar; one egg; one-half cup of butter; one teaspoonful of soda; two and one-half cups of flour; dark spices.

WHITE CAKE.—One cup of sugar; one-half cup of butter; one-half cup of sweet milk; two cups of flour; the whites of three eggs; one-half a teaspoonful of soda; one teaspoonful of cream tartar sifted with the flour. Beat butter and sugar thoroughly together, add the whites of eggs beaten to a foam, then the flour and milk, and soda last.

CHICKEN CHIFFON.—Boil two chickens in merely water enough to cook them very tender. Take them out when done, remove all the bones, mince the meat up very fine, season with salt, pepper and butter, and return them to the water in which they were boiled. Cook them until the liquor is nearly gone, then pour the contents out into a deep dish, lay a plate over it, put on a weight, and set it away in a cool place. Cut in slices; it will be as firm as cheese.

VARNISH FOR BALLOONS.—A good varnish for balloons may be prepared by mixing 8*l.* litres of boiled linseed oil with the same quantity of unboiled, to which must be added 55 grammes of yellow wax, the mixture to be boiled gently for one hour. The varnish used for the balloons despatched from Paris during the siege was composed of linseed oil and oxide of lead. This varnish was applied, not with a brush, but by means of a rag, the better to fill all the apertures which might exist in the stuff of which the balloon was composed. Whenever time allowed the varnish was applied to both sides, but generally time did not permit more than the exterior application.

MISCELLANEOUS.

By a fire at Stamboul, a suburb of Constantinople, a hundred houses were burnt down on the 8th ult. Among them was the mansion of the Grand Vizier.

The jewels of the late Duke of Brunswick, which he bequeathed to Geneva, are to be publicly exhibited in that town next summer.

The Empress Eugénie, according to a Parisian report, has decided that her son shall stand next July the examination for the Military School of St. Cyr.

AN Aberdeen gentleman is authority for the statement that a diet of beans is better for the complexion than all the powders and creams ever manufactured.

THE MILDEST WINTER.—This has been the mildest winter, says a correspondent, that has been known in the Scilly Islands for the last century. The fields look green as in April, and the birds sing merrily. The early potatoes are in some places six inches high.

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.—The ceremonies observed at the reception of Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra, March 7th, 1863, at Gravesend, will, in all probability, be repeated upon the occasion of the landing of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, at the same place March 7, 1874.

We understand that the Prince of Wales has been offered the Commodoreship of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, and has graciously been pleased to accept the same. The present Commodore (Lord Alfred Paget) has been with the club since its formation, and has ever been noted for his zeal and attention to yachting matters, and the welfare of the Club.

A COSTLY HANDKERCHIEF.—Among the pocket-handkerchiefs in the trousseau of the Duchess of Edinburgh there is one that was exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1867 in the Italian department. It was purchased last year in Italy for 12,000 francs by the Czarina, and is said to have cost the embroiderer seven of the best years of her life and her eyes into the bargain.

EDUCATION IN SPAIN.—Of the fifteen million inhabitants of Spain twelve millions can neither read nor write. There are four thousand villages, towns, and cities presided over by mayors two thousand of whom are unable to sign their names to any public document. The only value of a Spaniard now is, however, to be able to shoulder a gun and pull a trigger.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. M.—The announcement will appear quite in the usual course.

ALICE.—A preparation of rose-water and glycerine is good for the face in cold weather. Apply at bedtime.

D. D. S.—The character of Diana Vernon occurs in Sir Walter Scott's novel of Rob Roy.

ARMOURER.—The younger branches of noble families are called cadets because their armorial shields are marked with a difference called a cadency.

ALEXANDER H.—Contains some neat lines. But "Past Transactions" is not a poetic expression. It is too prosaic.

YOUNG LIVERPOOL.—We believe that they wear scarlet coats, and we suppose that the coats are also braided much as you describe.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. The hair has not reached us. 2. If you will copy the inscription accurately we will then tell you.

X. X. X.—The Adelphi Theatre is so called because it was built by the brothers Adams; adelphi being the Greek word for brothers.

TWO.—The matter is a rather intricate one. The misconduct of your wife would have to be proved, and the expense would be at least 15l. But we will get you full and exact particulars.

SALADIN.—Geoffrey Hudson, an English dwarf, when a youth of eighteen inches high, was served up to table in a cold pie, before the king and queen, by the Duchess of Buckingham, in 1626.

FLORENCE ELLEN.—1. There is a suffragan bishop of Dover. 2. It is the lady's place to recognize. 3. Veils. 4. Rise certainly when your guest enters the room. 5. Sir Eustace according to the story.

L. E. P.—Pretty, and we think you will in time do something really good. "Five feet from my height" is a syllable short, such a word as And at the beginning would rectify that error. Read our best poets, and try again.

STUDENT.—1. So far as we can follow your meaning we should say Huxley on Physiology, and perhaps Walker's Analysis of Beauty in Women. The various art criticisms would also aid you. 2. It would, no doubt, tend to darken the complexion.

CONSTANCE.—Burning the dead was a frequent though not universal practice among the Greeks and Romans. It is described by Homer. It was revived at Rome by the dictator Sulla about 78 B.C. In more modern days the poet Shelley's body was burned on the beach at Spozzia.

THOMAS H.—1. We cannot say. 2. Mrs. Norton's poem on the Soldier of the Legion appeared originally in a fugitive form. The place you mention is Bingen, not Bingham. Mrs. Norton's numerous productions have not as yet been collected into volumes. But the poem you mention is quoted at length in Bryce's Reader, published by Nelsons.

C. L.—1. The use of dumb bells and frequent bathing. 2. Consult the advertising columns of one of the daily papers. There is a book specially entitled "How to Grow Fat." A fine, full, rounded figure is charming in a lady, but men generally object to obesity. Stout as a beverage, and food of a saccharine sort would serve your purpose.

JOVIAN (Liverpool).—1. The soap would be found exceedingly serviceable. 2. Use a leaden comb, or use the dye mentioned in our last number. 3. The hair must have a natural tendency to curl, else nothing whatever will make it keep in curl constantly. Use perhaps curling irons, though we are inclined to advise you to let well alone. 4. The ordinary olive oil with which any chemist will supply you is as good as anything.

FORSTER.—The Fairlop oak, with a trunk 49ft. in circumference, the growth of five centuries, was situated in the forest of Hainault, in Essex, and was blown down in February, 1820. Beneath its branches a fair was annually held on the first Friday in July, which originated with the eccentric Mr. Day, a pump and block maker of Wapping, who, having a small estate in the vicinity, annually required here with a party of friends, to dine on beans and bacon.

ROBERT'S BELOVED asks certainly many questions, but we will try to answer them as concisely as possible. 1. The use of Turkish baths would, no doubt, be beneficial, always supposing that you have no tendency to heart disease. 2. It all depends upon circumstances. If you dislike the man, it would of course be improper. Generally there would be no harm done, provided they were given them and accepted for friendship alone. 3. The young lady must certainly judge for herself. We can't see the least diffi-

culty. 4. It depends upon the age when she leaves school. Not before nineteen, as a rule. 5. In Burke's Peerage—the most elaborate book of the sort—the name is given as Victoria.

ANTIQUARY.—Robert Fitzwalter, lord of the manor of Dunmow, Essex, in 1254, enacted "That whatever married couple will go to the priory, and kneeling on two sharp-pointed stones, will swear that they have not quarrelled nor repented of their marriage with a year and a day after its celebration shall receive a fitch of bacon." The earliest recorded claim for the bacon was in 1445, since when to 1855 it had only been demanded five times. The people were either quarrelsome, or retiring, or else cared not for the boon. On the 18th of July, 1855, fitches were awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, of Chipping Ongar, and to the Chevalier Chataleine and his wife. The lord of the manor opposed this revival the previous award being in 1751, but Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, the novelist, and some friends, defrayed the expense, and superintended the ceremonies. A fitch was again awarded in 1860.

O. D. Y.—A bunion is caused by the pressure or friction of the shoe; the irritation makes the skin swell. Sometimes it is removed in the beginning by keeping a strip of adhesive plaster applied to it as long as there is any discomfort. If inflamed, apply a bread-and-milk poultice, or water compresses, until relieved; or rub into the bunion twice a day, patiently, some ointment made by mixing half an ounce of lard with fifteen grains of iodine, and wear a loose shoe. These bunions generally come on the ball of the great toe, or the inside of the first joint of that toe, or the little toe, or on the last step, caused by too narrow shoes and high heels; hence at once put on a loose slipper without any heels. Cover the bunion with a piece of oiled silk covered with some pain-killer or other ointment. Take a larger piece of buckskin, cut a hole in it large enough to receive the bunion; then another piece of oiled silk over that; in this way the bunion is relieved from the pressure which caused it. Rub the ointment first named on the bunion twice or thrice a day, patiently and well, with the finger.

THE PERFECTED LOVER.

Now how shall I write you, and what shall I say?

Oh, would I could think of some unheard-of lay;

To tell you I love and adore you is first,

And only expected from children at play.

The sun, moon and stars by all lovers are sung;

As girls, and meek lasses, often are strung;

The flowers, poor things, have been plucked from their beds,

And worked into chaplets by aged and young.

The morning, the noon, and the night's balmy air,

Are tainted by tossing so much golden hair.

The brooklet is hoarse from repeating sweet names,

And dim from reflection of faces so fair.

The birds have grown sick, even the mild turtle dove

Has lost all its feathers within the cool grove,

The meek little fawn has gone off in fright

And ventures no more near the man that's in love.

The blue from the arch has been stolen for eyes,

The ruby and cherry are robbed of their dyes,

The snowflakes, and dew drop with pearls from the deep,

Of dashed over idols, as garbage now lies.

And I am disgusted—but not, girl, with you—

With trying to think of a wile not objected to.

So since I can't find in all nature your type,

I'll wish you good luck, and I bid you adieu.

J. W. P.

BIDDEE, nineteen, tall, fair, loving and domesticated.

Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, and fond of home.

ANNIE, twenty-six, tall, stout, and is of agreeable disposition.

Respondent must be thirty, and fond of home.

B. H., tall, dark complexion, and good tempered, is in want of a wife, has an income of 200l. per annum, and is twenty-four.

LOVELY PET, twenty-three, fair complexion, and of affectionate disposition.

Respondent must be dark, and between thirty and forty.

A widower not objected to.

TOM BOWLER, a sailor, twenty-two, 5ft. 9in., blue eyes, fair complexion.

Respondent must be good tempered, and fond of home.

SELINA, twenty-four, medium height, good tempered and affectionate.

Respondent must be about the same age, and fond of home.

ADA, twenty-nine, medium height, thoroughly domesticated, and would make an excellent wife.

Respondent must be affectionate, and must occupy a good position.

B. L., eighteen, tall, and very pretty, desires to correspond with a young gentleman, who must be tall and handsome.

JESSIE, nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, and has a little money.

Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and respectfully connected.

NEMO, thirty-four, tall, lately returned from Australia, and having a good annual income.

Respondent must be a good housekeeper, affectionate, and domesticated.

LA MARMORA, thirty-six, 5ft. 11in., a non-commissioned officer, handsome, and warmhearted.

Respondent must be good looking, affectionate, and domesticated.

POLLY, twenty, petite, affectionate, merry, and fond of music, desires to correspond with a gentleman able to keep a loving little wife in a comfortable position.

CLARINDA, twenty, a Scottish girl, blonde, well educated, and affectionate.

Has good expectations on the death of a relative. Respondent must be about thirty, loving, and domesticated.

ALEXANDER, twenty-five, medium height, a tradesman, with good income, and domesticated, desires to find a suitable partner, who must be good looking and fond of home.

E. T. F., forty-two, retired from the Navy, a widower, and with a family of four, all out in life; he is of light complexion, 5ft. 6in., and very good looking.

Respondent must be good looking, must have some income, and must be tall.

must be good looking, must have some income, and must be tall.

DEVEREUX, thirty-two, tall, considered handsome, and engaged in the medical profession. Respondent must be a lady, must be a good housekeeper, and must have some income of her own.

SELINA, nineteen, medium height, a blonde, considered pretty, and fond of home. Respondent must be good looking, affectionate, and in a position to keep a wife comfortably.

ALICE, twenty-three, a native of Florence, accomplished and a proficient in music, desires to correspond with a professional man, of affectionate disposition, and occupying a good position.

MABEL, nineteen, petite, a blonde, considered very pretty, and sings and dances admirably. Respondent must be good looking, affectionate, and a tradesman preferred.

EAST, twenty-seven, 5ft. 10in., clerk in a solicitor's office, and considered good looking, desires to correspond with a young lady who must be pretty, affectionate, and of similar age.

HAPPY JOE, twenty-four, tall, considered handsome, and occupying a farm in Hampshire. Respondent must be not over twenty, affectionate, and able to manage home affairs.

CHARLES, eighteen, petite, pretty, a native of France, and speaks fluently her own language, Italian, and Spanish. Respondent must be about thirty, and must be in a good position, with some private income.

B. B., nineteen, hazel eyes, dark hair, of a fair complexion, height 5ft. 3in., wishes to correspond with a young lady of a fair complexion, who must be fond of home.

WALTER, twenty, 5ft. 6in., a sailor, blue eyes, of a dark complexion, of a loving disposition, and fond of home, wishes to correspond with an affectionate and domesticated young lady.

SAMMY, twenty-two, medium height, fair complexion, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a loving heart and fond of home.

BATLINE JACK, sailor, R.N., twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., blue eyes, auburn hair, loving, and fond of children, wishes to correspond with a young lady between twenty and twenty-four, must be loving and fond of children.

L. H., twenty, 6ft., light complexion, well educated, wishes to correspond with a lady, who must be thoroughly domesticated, and must possess an income of her own.

A GARDENER'S DAUGHTER, twenty, tall, and considered good looking, of a very loving disposition, and used to all household work. Respondent must be loving, domesticated, and of steady habits.

NELLY AND SUSIE. "Nelly," twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes. "Susie," nineteen, tall, blue eyes and brown hair, would like to correspond with two tall, dark gentlemen, about three years their senior.

KATE AND MAUD, twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, are both of affectionate dispositions, cheerful, and thoroughly domesticated, desire to correspond with two young men, whose ages must be between twenty-five and thirty, and of loving dispositions. Clerks or tradesmen preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MIRA by—"Louis," twenty-five, 5ft. 10in., dark, and is quite sincere in his desire to render her happy.

CLARA V. by—"T. W.," twenty-eight, dark, 5ft. 11in., good looking, and would make an affectionate husband.

FELICE by—"W. H.," who would make her a loving husband.

LOVING FLO by—"J. A.," twenty-four, tall, dark, fond of home, and is an engineer.

LOVING JESSY by—"J. W.," who thinks he would suit her admirably.

MELUS by—"J. W.," eighteen, brown hair and eyes, loving, and fond of home.

BUSINESS HARRY by—"Carry S.," fair, and fond of home, who thinks she will suit him.

LAST ROSE OF SUMMER by—"J. Y.," forty-five, dark, a tradesman, a teetotaler, and a widower, no family.

EUSTACE by—"Bessie," nineteen, auburn curly hair, blue eyes, musical, and thoroughly domesticated.

EDWARD by—"Jennie," seventeen, golden hair, gray eyes, musical, and very fond of singing.

MAY T. by—"Valentine," twenty-five, who thinks that he perfectly answers to her description.

C. D. of HULL by—"E. M. B.," a widow, about the age required, and would make a good wife.

GLADIATOR by—"Lady Maud," eighteen, 5ft. 4in., fair complexion, and considered pretty, and possessing a little money.

FIREBARK by—"Mario," twenty, who thinks she is quite suitable, and by—"Polly," she is twenty, and is used to all domestic duties.

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